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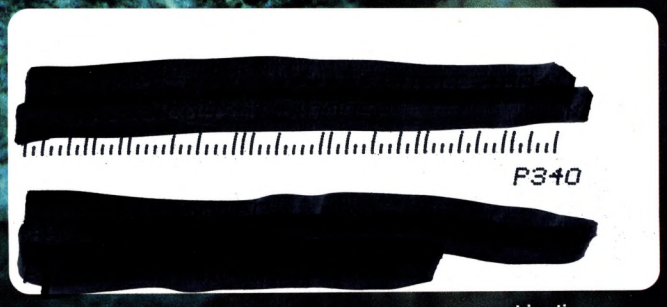
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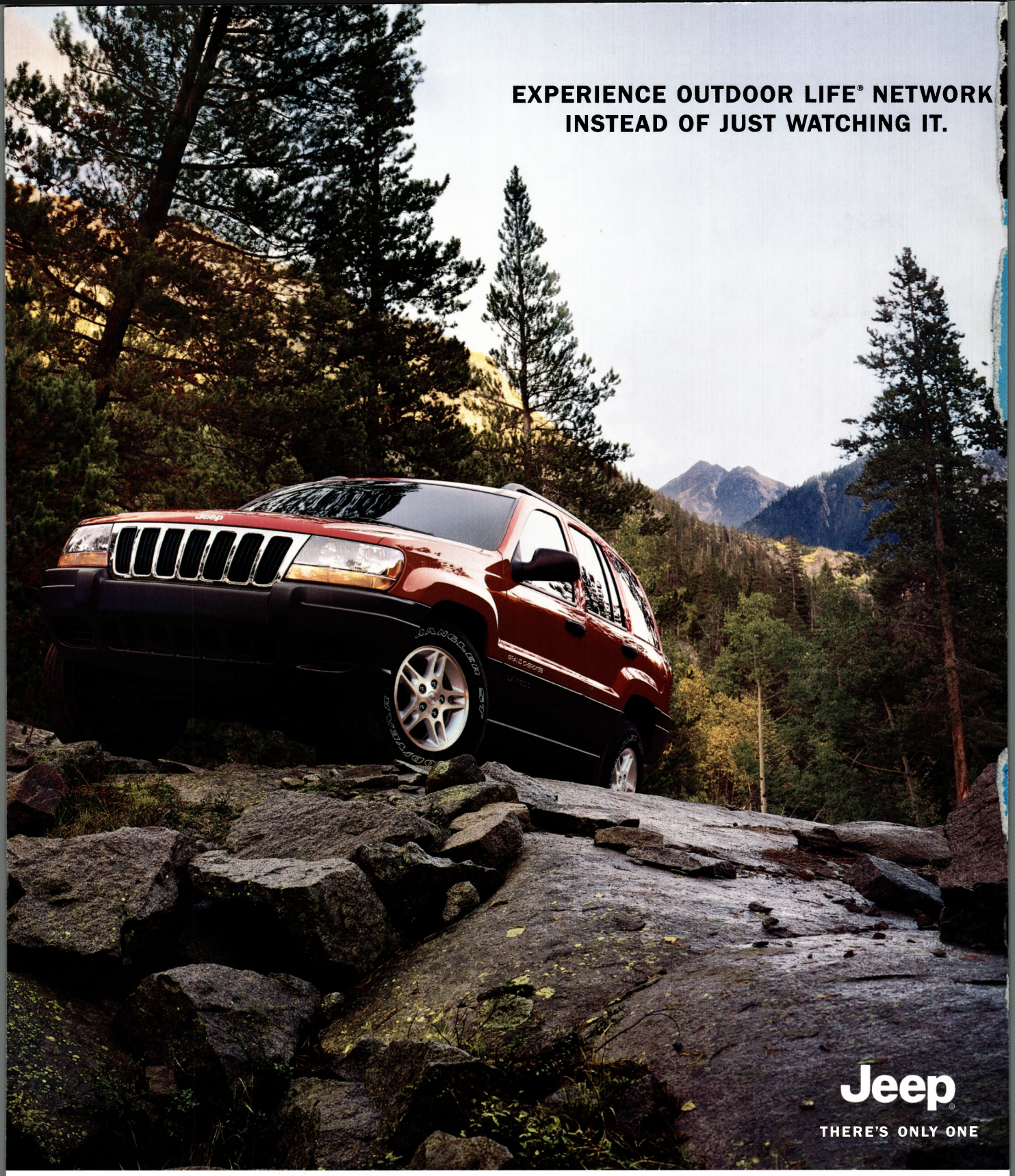
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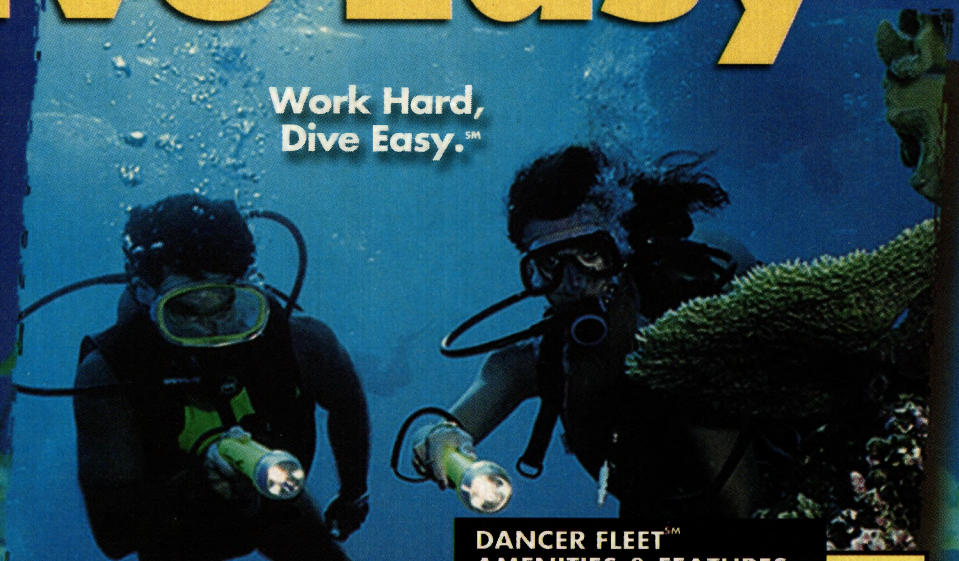
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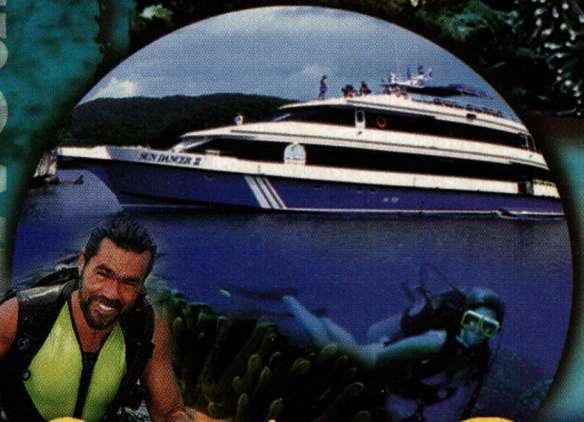
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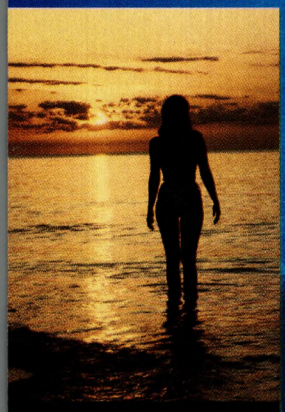
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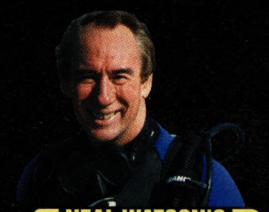
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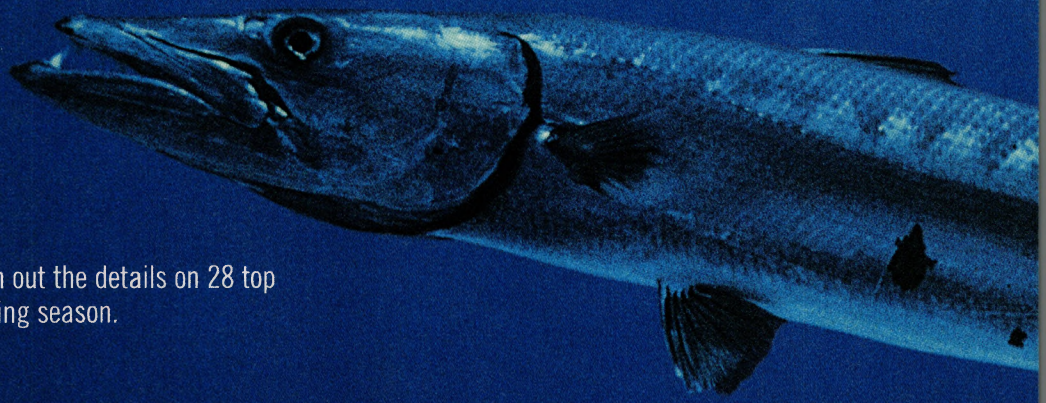
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About the cover:
A diver exploring Grand *Cenote*, in Mexico's Maya Riviera.
PHOTO: BURT JONES & MAURINE SHIMLOCK

Background photo:
A Great Barracuda patrols the waters amongst a squadron of Horse-eye Jacks.
PHOTO: JAY IRELAND & GEORGIENNE BRADLEY

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ON LOCATION

BELIZE It's been said that the Great Blue Hole is how God keeps the ocean blue. Indeed, from the air, it does look as if He's added a few drops of ink to the water. Regardless, the diving in all of Belize has a supernatural quality. The largest barrier reef in the hemisphere and four coral atolls are home to everything from brilliant invertebrates and fish life to king-size turtles and Whale Sharks (pg 64).



COZUMEL Better brush up on your navigation skills—not because Cozumel's dive sites are the cat's cradle, but because the whirlwind of marine life is sure to leave you dizzy. Clouds of Silversides envelop you, giant Black Groupers lurk about while pairs of Queen and French Angelfish glide above and below you. Which way's up? (pg 60)



FT. LAUDERDALE MTV brought Ft. Lauderdale spring breaks to living rooms everywhere—amazing beaches, beautiful bodies and incredible nightlife. But they failed to bring the city's real fame to light—wreck diving. From the 198-foot *Mercedes* to the *Copenhagen* steamship, each site brings divers to their knees in awe. Spring break is okay, but the real action is on the wrecks (pg 73).



PALAU Remember as a kid when you got in trouble, the teacher told you to go sit in the corner? Well, trade in your dunce hat for scuba gear and a reef hook. Hook into Blue Corner and hang on tight as hordes of sharks stream by you, Barracuda swirl overhead, and octopi gaze up at you wondering, *So, what d'ya think?* The words, "Go sit in the corner," never sounded so sweet (pg 78).



RIVIERA MAYA Change is inevitable, but in the case of Riviera Maya, the less the better. Returning to their old stomping grounds, Burt Jones and Maurine Shimlock found the reefs just as pristine, the marine life just as plentiful and the people just as hospitable as they were two decades ago. Old friends, both above and below sea level, invite our writer/photographers back with "big Mexican-style hugs" (pg 54).



TURKS & CAICOS In true David Letterman fashion, writers Matt and Angela Weedon give *Skin Diver* readers the top 10 dives of the Turks and Caicos, and the site's names say it all. Check out Ampitheater, Grace Bay's Aquarium and Highway to Heaven. And, guess what grabbed the coveted No. 1 slot? Drum roll, please…*did you really think we'd just tell ya?* (pg 90)





CONTRIBUTORS

ELLSWORTH BOYD is professor emeritus, College of Education, Towson University,



Towson, MD. Pursuing an avocation of diving and writing, he has published articles and photos in every major dive magazine in the U.S., in addition to magazines in Canada, Italy, Germany and France. An authority on shipwrecks, Ellsworth has received thousands of letter and e-mails from divers throughout the world in response to his long-lived Wreck Facts column. When he's not writing or diving, Ellsworth appears as a featured speaker at maritime symposiums in Houston, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.

BURT JONES and **MAURINE SHIMLOCK** pioneered diving in the Riviera Maya from their operation in Puerto Morelos during the 1970s and



80s. For "Return to Riviera Maya" (page 54), they went back and visited many of their former students who now run top operations along the coast. Diving near Playa del Carmen, they were pleasantly surprised to see that their favorite sites were still teeming with fish. At "The Tunnels" they even reconnected with "El Gigante," a huge Spotted Moray Eel they dived with 15 years ago.

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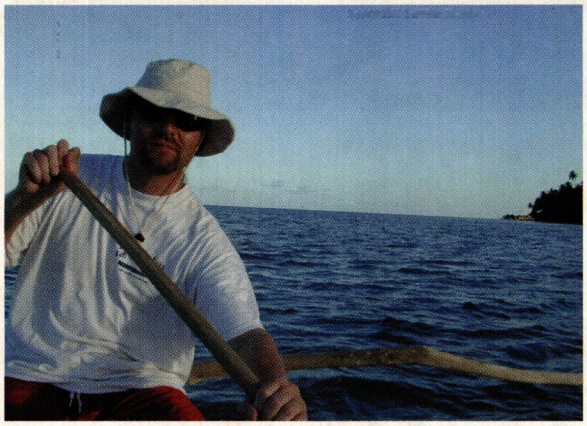
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Temples & Pilgrimages

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I FANTASIZED ABOUT HACKING MY WAY THROUGH A JUNGLE AND discovering an ancient pyramid. Images of immense stone edifices poking up through the dense, green undergrowth and hidden by time fascinated me. And the mysteries concealed in their ancient writings and long forgotten culture fed my desire to discover their secrets. Then along the way, I learned to dive and suddenly, I found an immense world packed with equally great monuments. Only these were poking up through the blue and covered with a spellbinding array of life, color and movement. I didn't lose my interest in ancient terrestrial artifacts, just shifted my focus to a world infinitely as mysterious, but more satisfyingly interactive. That there exists a 1,000-mile stretch that extends from Cancun to Central America where the two worlds collide, almost makes me giddy.

And, I'm not alone. Rick Frehsee, who has been contributing to *Skin Diver* for 20 years and traveling to Belize for even longer, has become a noted expert on this part of the world, both above and below. His knowledge of the ancient Maya of Belize is as intimate as his knowledge of the world's second longest barrier reef, just off the coast of this English-speaking Central American country. He even reads Maya hieroglyphics with the same ease as he perfectly captures images of the essence of diving one of the seven wonders of the underwater world.



Just north of Belize, the island of Cozumel has always been a must-dive destination for underwater pilgrims, many of whom return for yearly visits. Clay Wiseman is one of the faithful, arriving year after year to experience the spectacular viz and overwhelming variety and immensely fertile life inhabiting the reefs just beyond the shoreline.

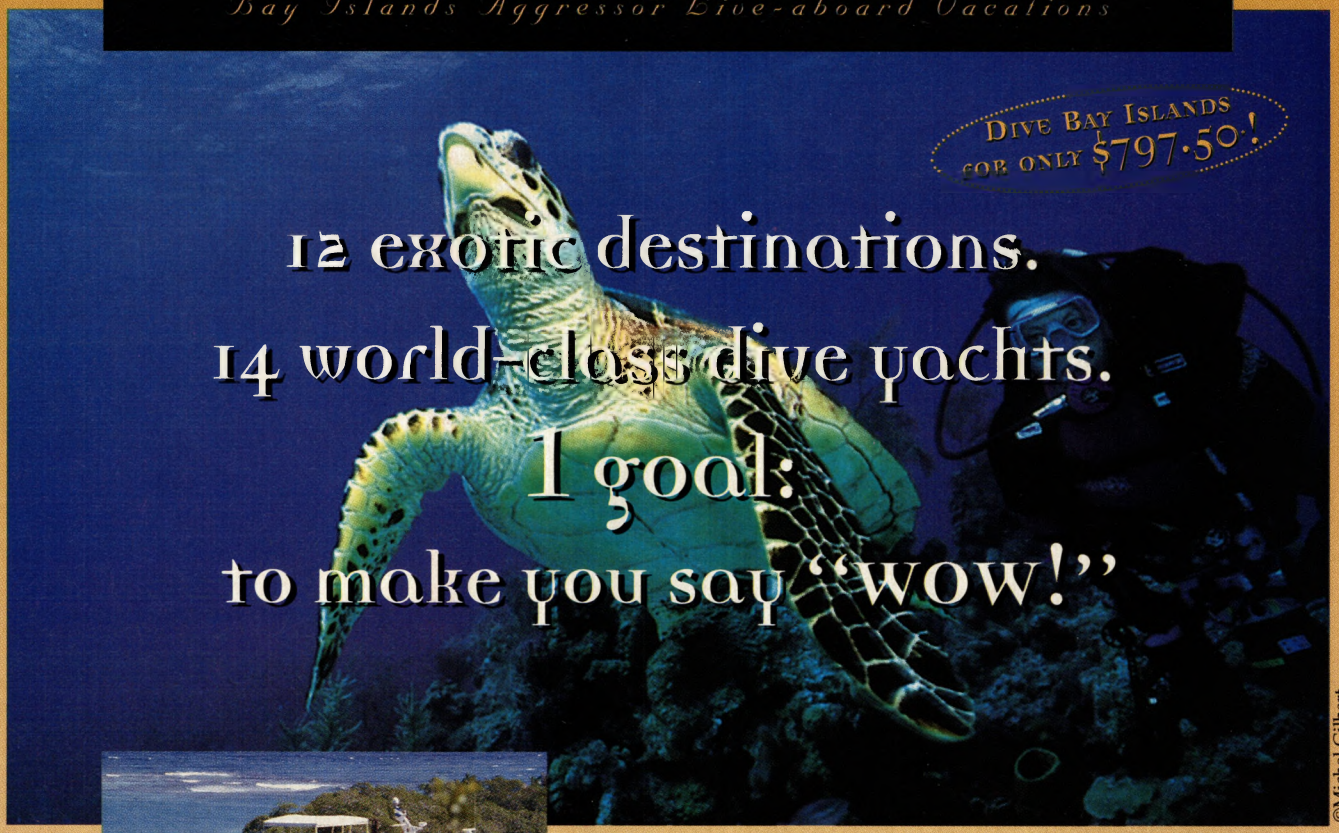
And, all along the Riviera Maya, stretching from the neon lights of Cancun to the border of Belize, divers practically follow the same footpaths as the Maya themselves in their quest to explore the underground waterways, called *cenotes*, which were the lifeblood of the gods. The jungle-choked openings to this inner realm await even beneath the shadows of pyramids and temples. Offshore is a fabled reef called Chinchorro, that has only recently been discovered by divers. Upon revisiting the area, writer/photographers Burt Jones and Maurine Shimlock found that little had changed since they lived there, 20 years ago.

Although I may never actually discover a Maya pyramid today, I can, with assurance, discover new worlds.

Good diving.

TY SAWYER, EDITOR

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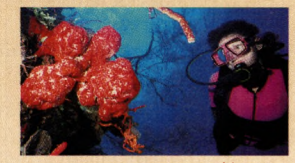
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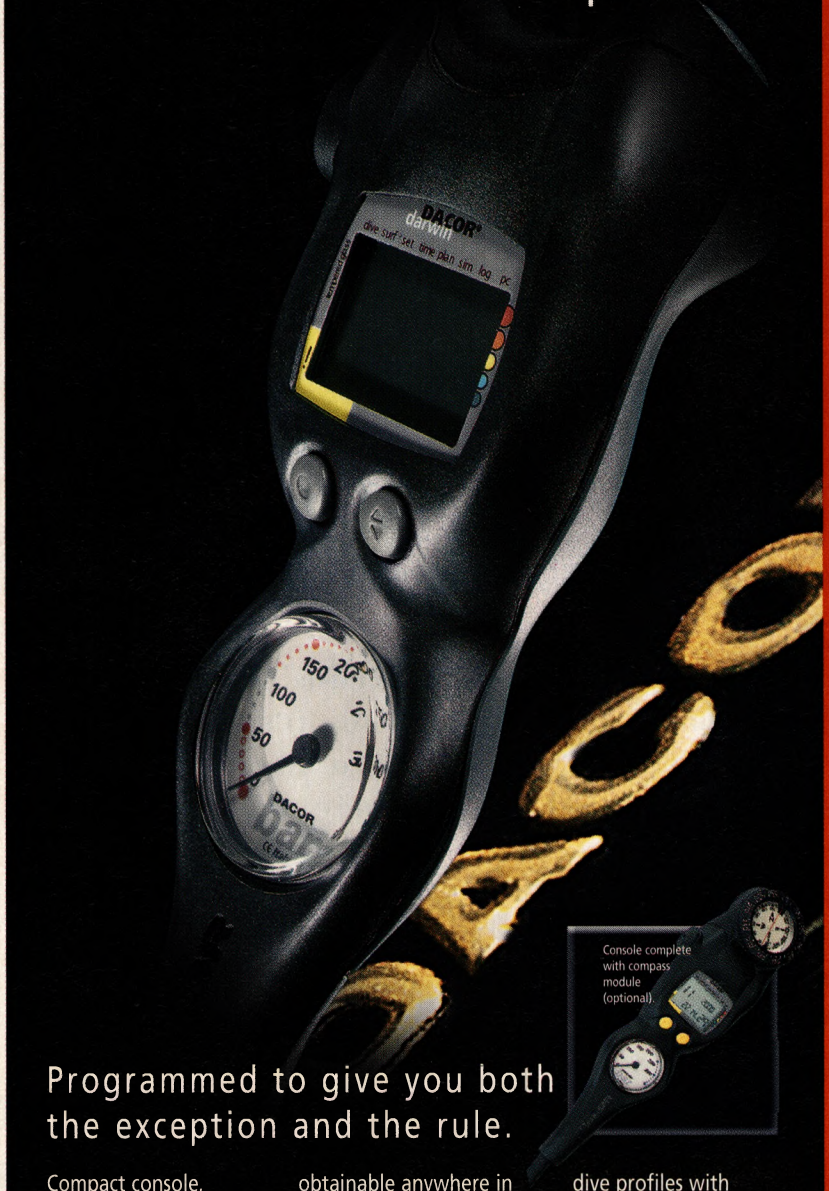


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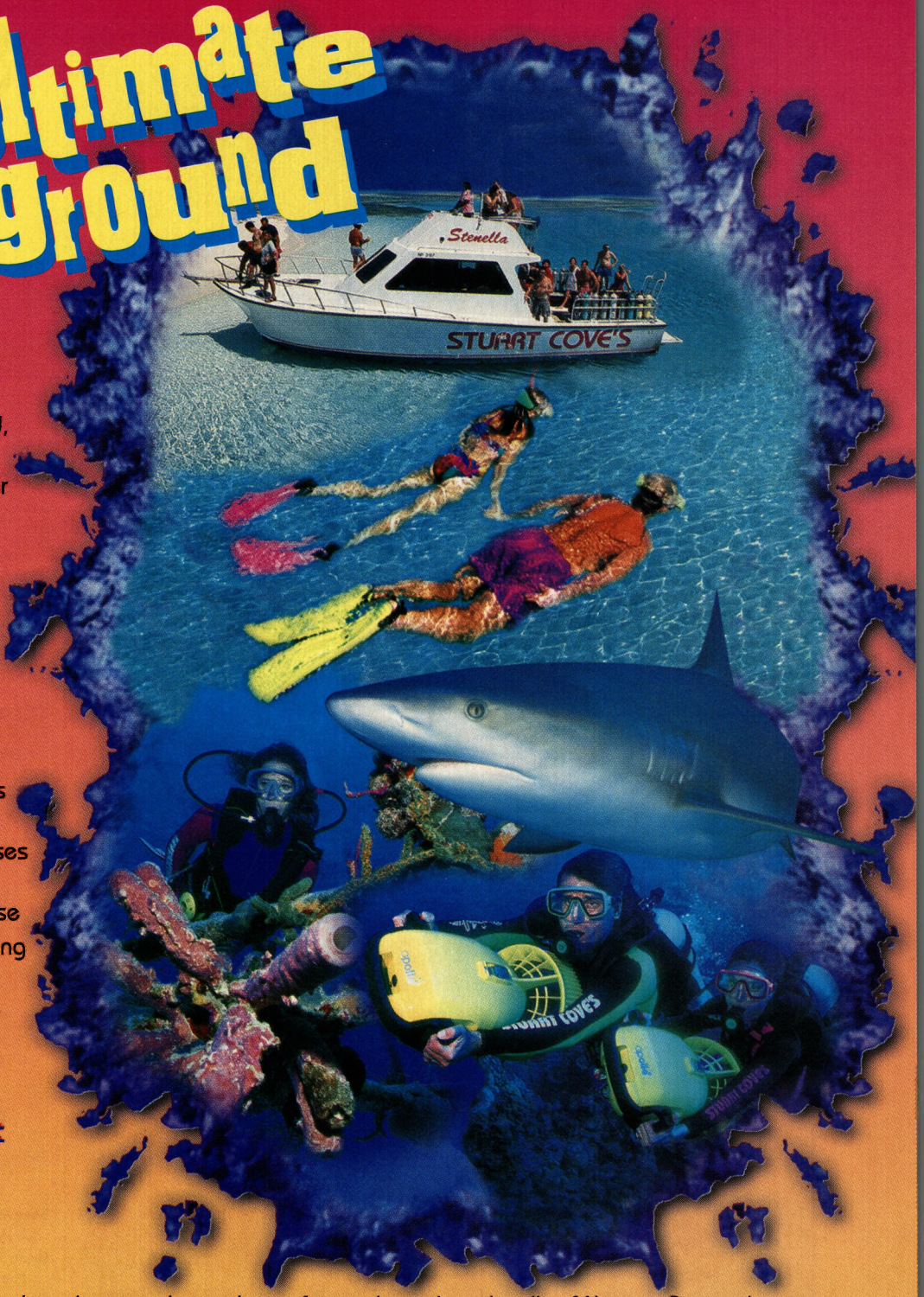
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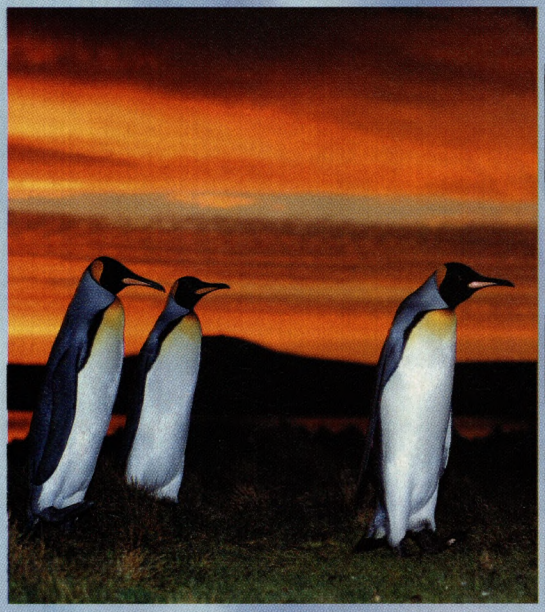
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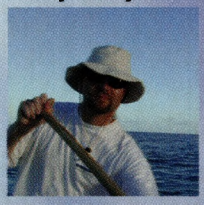

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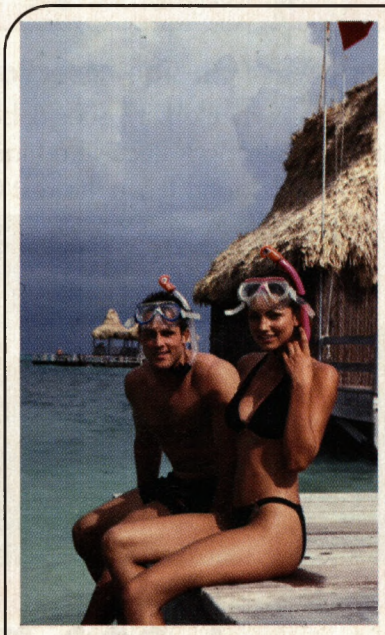
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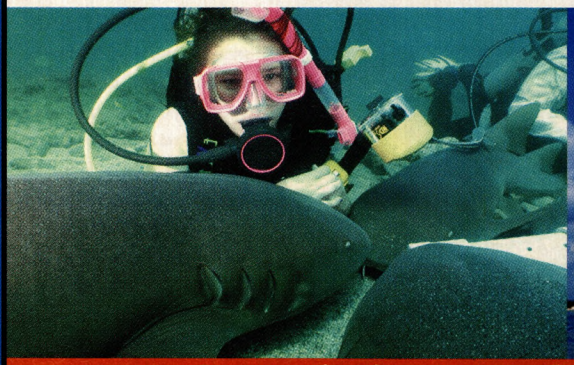
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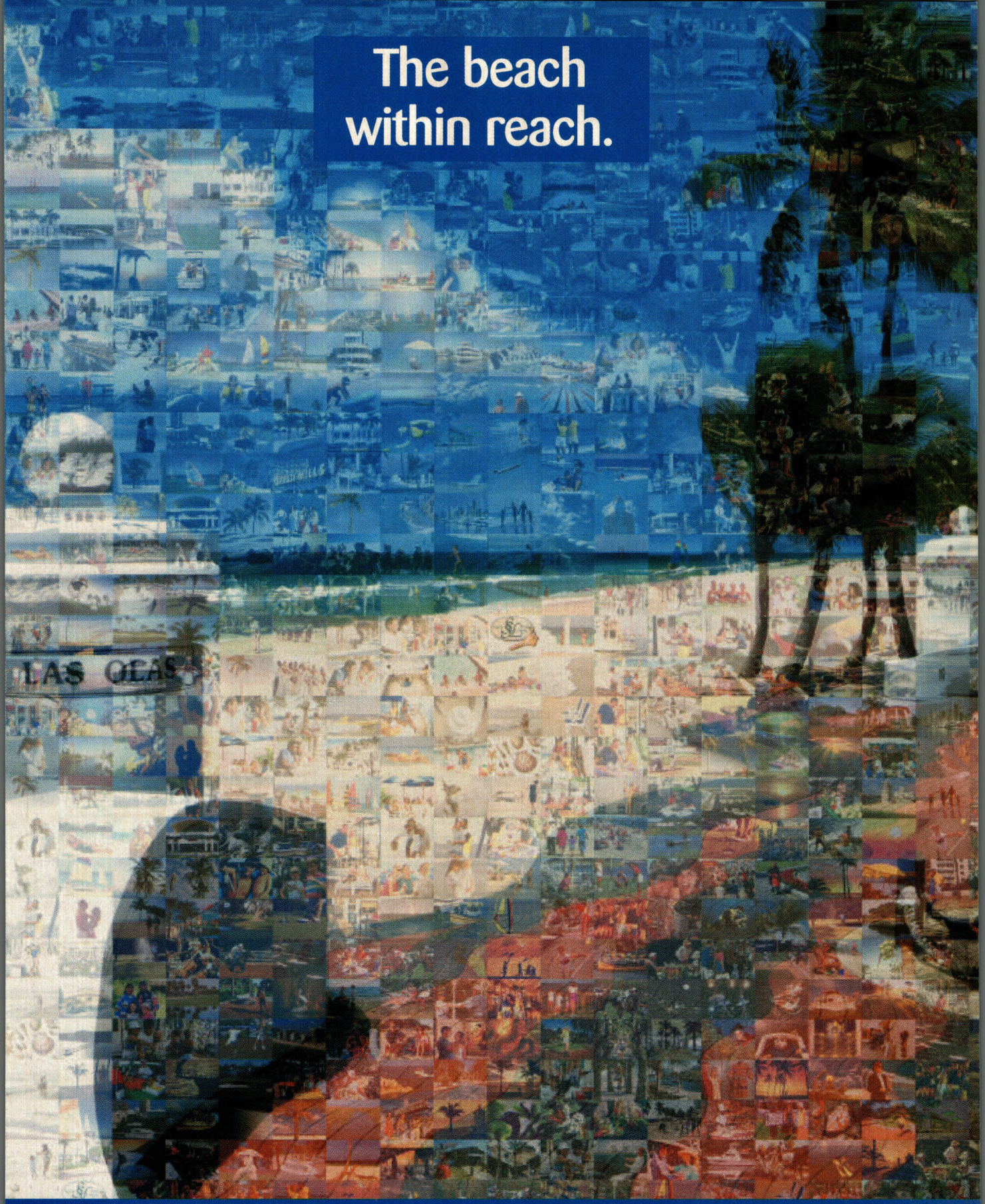
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LETTERS

Readers Speak Out

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This month we received a huge response to the February cover. Many of you wrote to us saying we'd crossed the line, some of you supported our choice. For those of you who were appalled, it's good to know you normally read the magazine for its content; on the other hand, this was probably not the most ideal way to find out. No matter what your response, though, thank you for writing in and expressing your views—both good and bad. We do read every letter that comes our way and, in the end, your comments help us hone the magazine to fit the needs of the people most important to us: the reader.

Unhappy & Uncensored

As I write this letter to you I am looking at the February issue of *Skin Diver* magazine, and for the first time I don't connect the cover with the sport of scuba diving. In fact, the buxomed, photogenic, pig-tailed, farmer's daughter-looking vixen says nothing about the sport to me. Please don't get me wrong—I know that sex sells and I am an avid consumer—but to me, the *kick off your flippers and come a little closer* look on your cover model's face just doesn't fit.



I will continue reading your magazine, but I just hope that those of us in this sport will want to read a sport periodical for its content and not its cover.

— Craig Fuhs, via e-mail

My husband and I have been getting *Skin Diver* magazine for quite some time now. We have really enjoyed the articles and information it has to offer and have always regarded it as one of the better scuba magazines. However, when I saw the cover of this month's issue, I was appalled. The first thing I thought of was "trashy girly magazines." I understand that you have many subscribers with many different tastes, but I felt that I needed to voice my opinion as a female diver who did not appreciate it.

—Denise Gunn, via e-mail

I ripped off the cover and pulled out the article pages. Now I'm happy with this issue.

—Ruth, via e-mail

I've had a subscription to *Skin Diver* for many years. I enjoy the magazine with all the great dive destinations, equipment and critter information. But I just received the February issue and was quite shocked to see the seductive cover photo. *Skin Diver* used to be a diving magazine that was suitable for a family coffee table. I would be embarrassed to put the February issue on mine. I certainly hope this is not the direction this magazine is going to take in the future.

— D. Jenkins, via e-mail

Happy & Uncensored

We'd like to let you know that we have thoroughly enjoyed the pictures in the February *Skin Diver*. We know there is a lot of uproar about this, but we can't conceive how anyone could find pictures of beautiful people in beautiful natural settings offensive. Thank you for having the guts to publish the pictures even though you undoubtedly knew how much flak you would catch for them.

— Olga Khainova & Alex Khain, DAN Members, Portland, OR

Hey there, y'all better hunker down because I expect you'll get a lot of heat about the magazine cover. I know she's never been on any dive boat with me. I like the cover.

—David Bishop, via e-mail

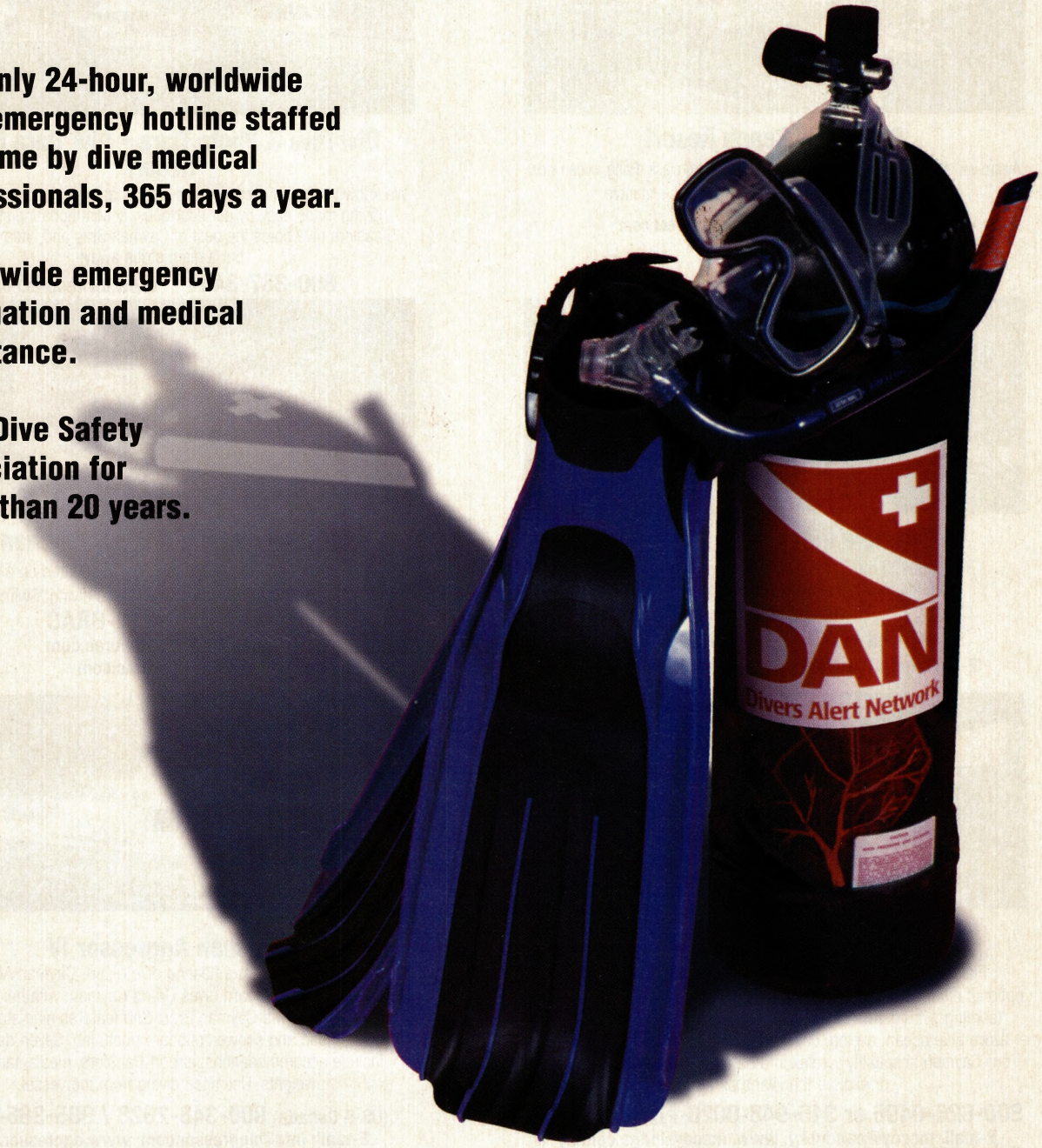
I just got your February issue and it's great. I could be saying that just about the fashion article, but there is also the abundance of great destination articles, the live-aboard guide and all your regular informative articles. You will no doubt get letters from a handful of nags objecting to the fashion article—just ignore them. The majority of us appreciate a little glamour now and then, and where better than St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

—Bob Blasingame, Jamestown, NC

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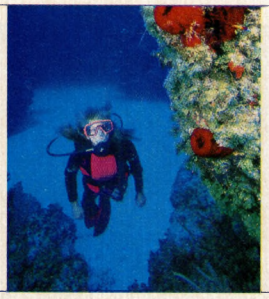


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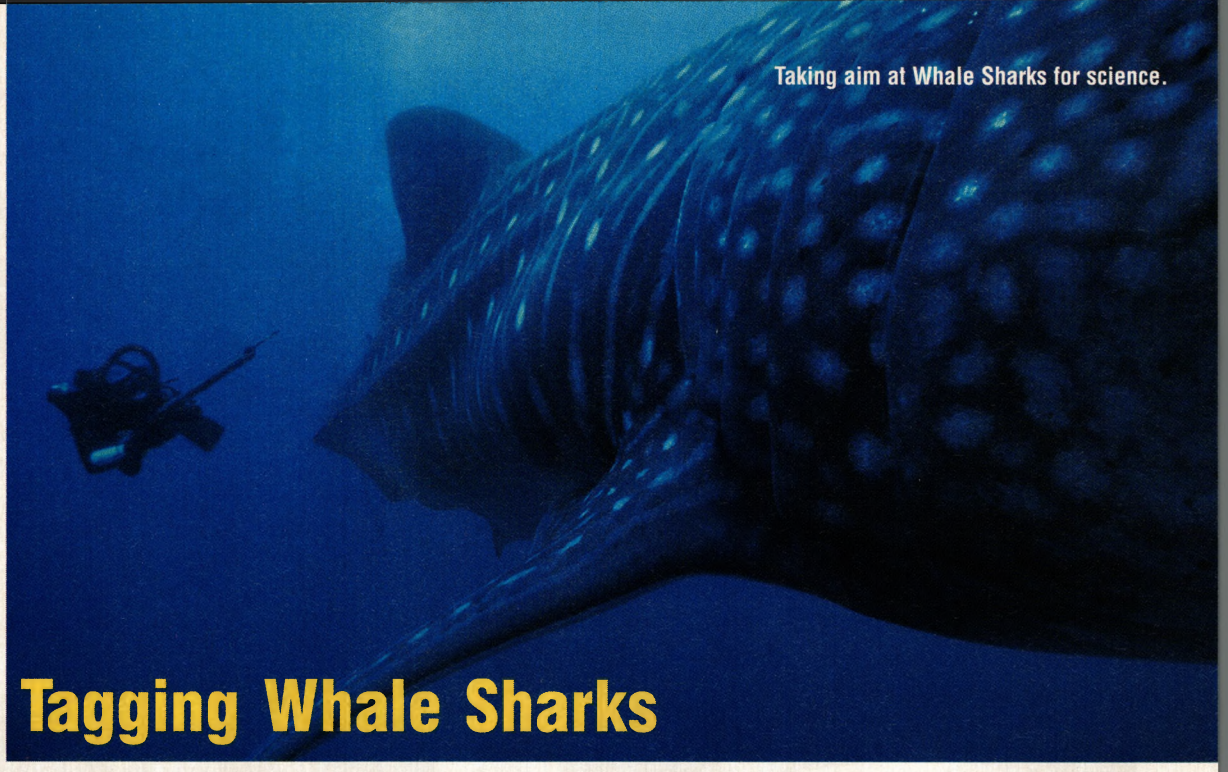
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Taking aim at Whale Sharks for science.

Tagging Whale Sharks

WE MUST HAVE LOOKED A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS carting a long, skinny box through the airport in Guayaquil, Ecuador. When we arrived in the Galapagos, we had to produce a permit from the government, explaining why we had brought a speargun. In order to keep from drawing attention to ourselves, we started referring to the gun as the "tagging device." We were about to take aim at Whale Sharks for science.

Around the world, fishermen have targeted Whale Sharks for the incredible amount of meat they yield. Ironically, the flesh of the Whale Shark doesn't have much taste. In the Far East, the bland meat of the Whale Shark has become known as "tofu shark." In the past few years, Whale Shark populations seem to be plummeting. Sightings on one popular liveaboard dive boat in Thailand have dropped from 50 to 60 per year to only a handful. Fishermen in India killed more than 1,000 in the year 2000 alone. They are also heavily hunted in the Philippines.

The Shark Research Institute (SRI), based out of New Jersey, recently started a satellite tagging program for Whale Sharks, hoping to learn about their migratory habits. In October 2001, I joined Alex and Cliff Simoneau on the second SRI trip to the Galapagos to make an attempt at tagging the world's largest fish.

Satellite tags have gotten smaller and smaller owing to technology. Shaped like a cylinder about as tall as a Coke can but only half the diameter, a satellite tag records all kinds of data and stores it in memory. At some point in the future (depend-

PHOTOS: (SHARKS) JONATHAN BIRD; (BENNETT) TOM MORRISEY. OPPOSITE PAGE: (RAY, PAINTING) RON STEVEN

BUSTING "THE GRAND"

John Bennett becomes the world's first to scuba dive past 1,000 feet

FOR SIX AND A HALF YEARS, JIM BOWDEN'S 925-foot cave dive in Zacaton (Mexico) stood as the deepest from-the-surface open-circuit scuba dive on record. That claim was held up by *The Guinness Book of World Records* and a similar dive later made by Nuno Gomes in 1996, in a cave at the bottom of Bushmansgat (South Africa).

But now that record has been broken—and in a spectacular fashion. At approximately 9:00 AM on November 6, 2001, John Bennett—a former British Army paratrooper who is now the technical diving instructor for Atlantis Dive Resort in Puerto Galera, Philippines—became the first person in the world to dive from the surface to more than 1,000 feet using open-circuit scuba.

Bennett dived from an anchored decompression platform and was filmed by a line-mounted camera that showed him clipping off a slate which had been signed at the surface by two witnesses. When the line was later measured on land, it showed that he had reached a depth of at least 1,010 feet. But, Bennett points out, the line was weighted with 154 pounds of chain, plus an underwater camera weighing approximately 33 pounds, and the dry-land measurements did not take into account the fact that the rope was doubtlessly stretched by the weight.

"We did not take any stretch factor into account," Bennett told *Skin Diver*. "We have heard different 'facts' on the stretch, ranging from 4 percent right up to 20 percent. The line was nylon line, three-strand, about one centimeter thick. Even if we took the lowest stretch estimate, that makes it 1,049 feet. All I can say is it took me a long time to get down there. On all



The now reigning "Captain Deep."

ing on how the tag is programmed), the tag releases itself from the shark and floats to the surface, where its antenna pops above water and sends its data to a satellite in orbit.

These tags could be incredibly valuable in protecting Whale Sharks. After all, we know next to nothing about them. SRI hopes to find out if the sharks migrate long distances or stay in smaller "home ranges." If the sharks travel widely, local protection won't work and only international treaties will save this threatened fish.

However, tagging a Whale Shark is easier said than done. A short tether connects the transmitter to a dart that is implanted into the thick skin at the base of the shark's dorsal fin. Even with a powerful speargun and a razor-sharp tip, 9 times out of 10 the $4,000 dart bounces right off, and the shark keeps on swimming as if nothing happened. On the first attempt, the stainless steel spear used to implant the barb bent in half! After six Whale Sharks, Alex was finally able to implant a tag. Over the course of a week, with 14 different sharks, only two tags stuck. With any luck, we will hear back from those tags in the following months and learn where the sharks traveled.

—Jonathan Bird

To find out how you can get involved, check out www.sharks.org.

Ray of Hope

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE September 11th attacks, artist Ron Steven wanted to do something to aid the people who were victims of the New York tragedy. So, he approached *Skin Diver* magazine to partner with him in an act of giving and gratitude.

"I want people, through my art, to think locally and act locally," says Ron.

"The Eagle Ray," is the featured work of art available for purchase for this fundraiser effort. Each work will be signed and numbered. All proceeds (minus production fees of approximately $75 per print) will benefit the Rescue One Relief Fund directly.

Ron, who paints under the name Rogest, has contributed art work to raise money for such causes as Ocean Pals in New York and the L.A. Underwater Photo Society, which is raising funds for the marine mammal care center in California, among others. Ron is clearly inspired to leave the world a better place.


"The Eagle Ray"

Cost is $275 + s/h (approx. $18) to any location in the U.S. To purchase the art or for more information, visit www.rogest.com or www.skin-diver.com.

Skin Diver Receives Folio Award



The staff at *Skin Diver* is pleased to share the acceptance of *Folio Magazine*'s 2001 Ozzie Award for Best Use of Black and White Photography in a Feature Story (Consumer Magazine, Over 100,000 Circulation). The exclusive photo essay by David Doubilet, "Sea Lion Reverie," in the March 2001 issue received the winning nod.

of my training dives I was maintaining a 100-feet-per-minute descent rate easily; on the actual dive, I never touched the inflator until I saw the lights of the camera, just after the 902 feet tag. The only gas added was air to the drysuit, to prevent squeeze. It took me a little less than 13 minutes to get down."

Bennett, who corresponded with Jim Bowden during preparation for the dive and was generous in his praise for Bowden's technical support ("...his advice guided me past quite a few pitfalls..."), said that his intention had been to keep mum about the dive unless it bettered Bowden's mark by at least 33 feet.

Contacted at his Texas ranch just days after the dive, Jim Bowden said that he was "astounded that the record had stood for as many years as it did."

"The 1,000-foot mark was out there, and it was inevitable that someone would get it," Bowden said. "I'm glad it went to John. He's a remarkable gentleman and too effusive, I think, in his praise for the little help that I gave him."

The 42-year-old Bennett, a married father of two who has been making sub-200-foot dives for about five years, performed the dive in blue water (out of sight of any bottom or wall structure), and Bennett reports that he was "...*very* task-focused at depth."

"I concentrated on clipping off the slate, monitoring myself for problems and preparing for the ascent," he said. "It was very black—a very dense darkness and cold—around 34°F temperature-wise. The light OMS made for me worked well."

Other critical equipment included two redundant 100-pound OMS wing-style buoyancy compensators, and Apeks Tx 50 and Tx 100 regulators.

Bennett reported muscle tremor and blurred vision—both symptoms of high-pressure nervous syndrome—at about 820 feet.

He made eight gas switches on his world-record dive—one on descent and seven on ascent. He carried his bottom mix, plus the initial two decompression mixes, one of which was also his descent gas.

"The other required gases were carried by the team," Bennett said. "I did not want them staged on the line in case I got washed off or had to leave the line for some reason."

(continued on page 86)



Will the Energy Revolution Leave the Poor in the Dark?

BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU

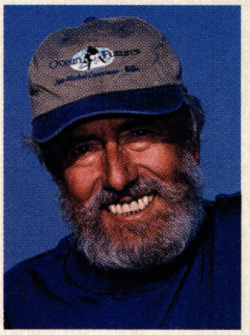


PHOTO: TOM ORDWAY, (JMC PHOTO) LIONEL POZZOLI

CLINGING TO ROCKS TO AVOID BEING swept away from a dive site is a familiar—and unpleasant—experience for many divers. But it's also instructive. Divers know better than anyone else that there's a lot of energy in the sea.

Now, others are catching on. With the world reeling from blackouts, pollution, war and the threat of global warming, many people are again searching for alternatives to fossil fuels and their effects. Solar and wind power lead the charge, but the underwater world may hold the most promise, especially for the world's poor.

Mr. Ed Hunt, editor of the environmental clearinghouse *Tidepool*, suggests that water power offers options that can be scaled to help those most in need. In particular, he has drawn attention to a variety of small underwater turbines made in Canada and the United States.

The Davis turbine was the brainchild of Barry V. Davis, a renowned aeronautical and hydrodynamic engineer. The power plant is a cylinder with four blades that, when placed in a moving current, provides renewable, emission-free power with none of the environmental disturbance—or crushing debt—involved in dams. More efficient than a windmill, the turbine may be scaled to fit a wide variety of locations, from bays and inlets where the daily tidal flux creates powerful surges, to rivers where the flow is more constant.

Another option is a spin on the Darrieus windmill of the 1930s refined by Alexander Gorlov, a mechanical engineer and professor at Northeastern University. The Gorlov turbine, a helix of sorts most recently discussed in the *Christian Science Monitor*, works on the same principle. It, too, generates power from currents large and small, but at nearly double the efficiency of a conventional turbine.

The Gorlov system is already furnishing power to villagers in the upper Amazon region of Brazil, and has attracted the interest of the South Korean government, which is weighing the installment of a larger array in an important offshore channel.



Iceland, a pioneer in the use of geothermal energy, is now heading the hydrogen revolution.

There remain considerable technical challenges, but peer reviewers are convinced that the technology is fundamentally sound. In 1994, the British Columbia Ministry of Employment and Investment scrutinized the Davis system, and concluded that it was mechanically viable. In its assessment, the agency went further toward the crux of the issue: "The question is not whether the technology works, but rather, can it produce electricity at competitive rates." Supporters claim it can, and reviewers have generally agreed.

But large-scale government support is lacking. This is, I think, a tragedy. For such innovations need to be boosted, especially when one considers the degree to which a doomed industry like oil continues to reap subsidies, tax incentives and other benefits. We should be investing in the future, not the past.

And we should be investing in the poor.

So far, a great deal of money has been poured into solutions that, by and large, will benefit the wealthier segment of humanity.

Iceland, for example, has dedicated itself to the ambitious goal of a hydrogen-based society within 30 years. This is a tremendous advance, politically and morally, and Iceland should be commended for its courage and vision.

The problem is that hydrogen, like oil, involves a massive and expensive infrastructure. Now, this is not a big obstacle for wealthier nations.

Investment in small-scale, decentralized power generation systems, such as the water turbine, can make a huge impact in places otherwise unable to afford electricity. They promise a...source of power that does not involve untenable national debt...or submerged natural treasures.

Industrialized societies can afford to pay a few dollars more for keen new technologies, and they have shown they will do so. At this time, it seems inevitable that hydrogen fuel cells will play a significant role in the energy future of Europe and the United States.

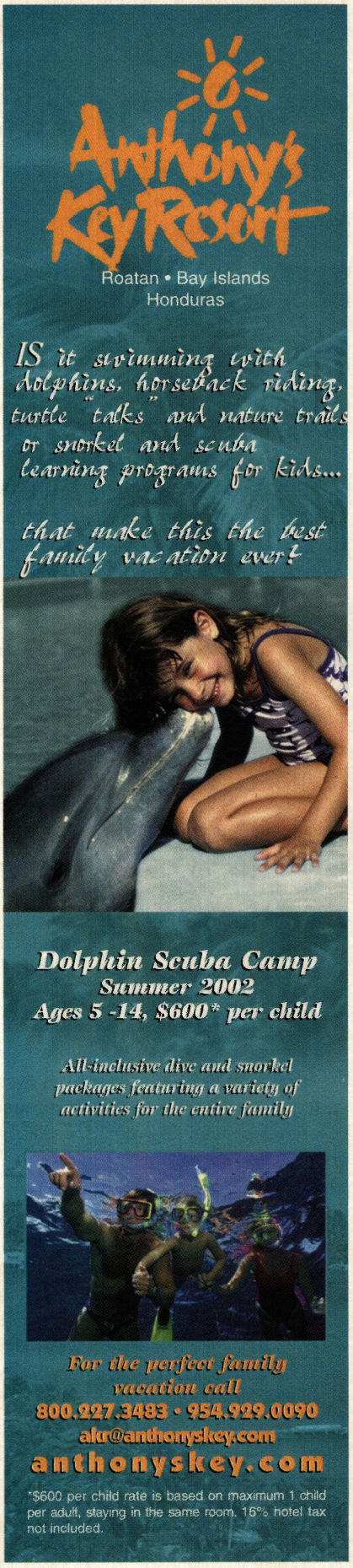
But what of the majority of humanity? It's hard to imagine fuel cells making much of an impact on the lives of textile workers in central China and farmers in Chad and herders in Bangladesh.

My concern is that without properly scaled energy generation and equitable distribution, development cannot raise material and social standards of living. And without that, developing countries will be unable to slow the destructive environmental practices born of poverty, practices which affect the entire planet.

On the other hand, a little bit goes a long way. Investment in small-scale, decentralized power generation systems, such as the water turbine, can make a huge impact in places otherwise unable to afford electricity.

They promise a simple, reliable, inexpensive source of power that does not involve untenable national debt, forced evacuations, or submerged natural treasures.

In the decades to come, we will see countless ingenious solutions to the energy problem. But we must take care not to fetishize these gadgets, but instead strive to ensure that innovation narrows, rather than widens, the gap between rich and poor.



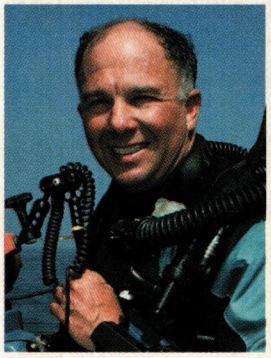
ASK THE PRO

Don't Be a Victim of Circumstance: *Go Blue Because You Want To*

When I look at photographs in Skin Diver *the water in wide-angle photographs is always so blue. Sometimes the water in my pictures is blue, but often it is not. Are you making the water blue on a computer or when you take the picture?* —Dorothy L. Fresno, CA

BY MARTY SNYDERMAN

THE COLOR OF THE WATER THAT SURROUNDS YOUR subjects and that appears in the backgrounds of your wide-angle photographs is often the factor that makes or breaks a shot. Blue-to-green water backgrounds give the illusion of depth in 2-dimensional photographs of wide-angle scenes making the images appear 3-dimensional. In addition, properly exposed foreground subjects may appear to jump out of photographs with properly exposed water color backgrounds because of the contrast between the subject and background.



Backgrounds that are too dark often consume foreground subjects causing them to be lost. As a result, badly underexposed backgrounds are distractions and can be ruinous. In addition, photographs that have dark backgrounds tend to have much more of a 2-dimensional look. If the background water is overexposed, the background will have a whitish blue-to-green or even clear look, depending upon the degree of overexposure. While a properly exposed foreground subject might look just fine, a badly overexposed background proves distracting to viewers.

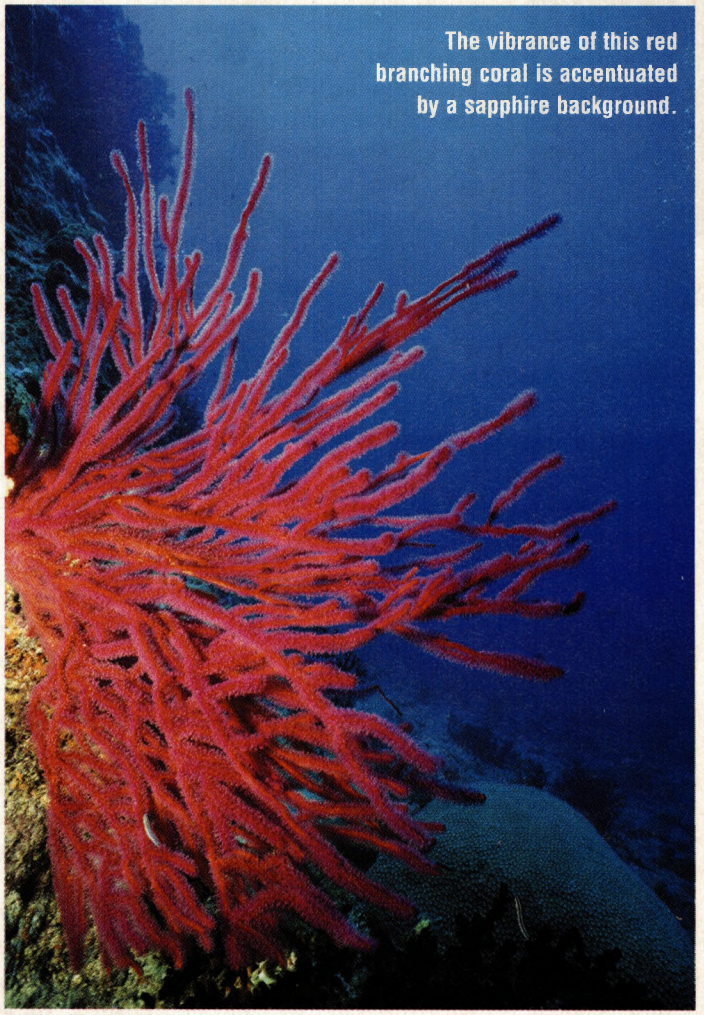
Having the background water color look like ocean water in your photographs should not be left to chance. As the photographer, you have control over what your backgrounds look like. While the background water color can be altered to some degree with a variety of software programs, you are far better off to capture the look you want when you create the image as opposed to trying to fix an image on a computer.

To create a sapphire background, first compose your frame so that you have water surrounding your subject or somewhere in the background. Then, take a light meter reading of the water in the background. That section of water usually should be immediately above, in front of or surrounding the part of your foreground subject where you want your audience to look. The light meter reading determines your f/stop. Remember, your strobe has no impact on the way the background will appear in your photographs; strobes impact foregrounds and foreground subjects. The background is illuminated by natural light or sunlight.

(Note: To create a slightly darker or more saturated background water, some photographers intentionally underexpose the background by ⅓ to ⅔ of a stop.)

Whether you shoot with film or digitally, both types of cameras are capable of light meter readings. Film cameras have built-in light meters or can be used with an independent light meter. Digital cameras can also take light meter readings.

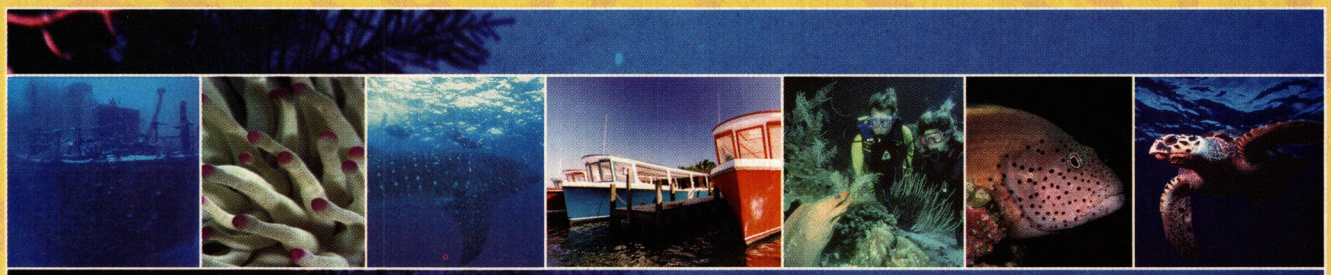
Given the right weather conditions, using the correct f/stop and properly exposing your foreground and background subjects will help you to create colorful and captivating images.



The vibrance of this red branching coral is accentuated by a sapphire background.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY?

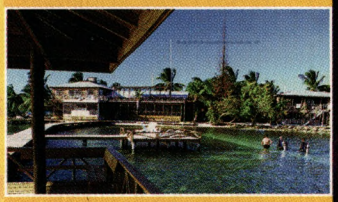
Take an online course at Marty Snyderman's School of Underwater Photography at www.skin-diver.com. This comprehensive course consists of nine interactive classes taken at your convenience.



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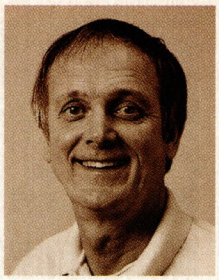
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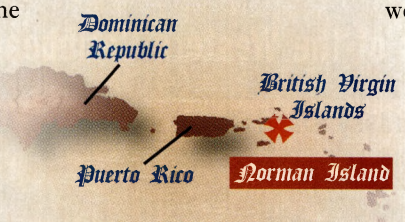
The Treasure of Norman Island

BY ELLSWORTH BOYD



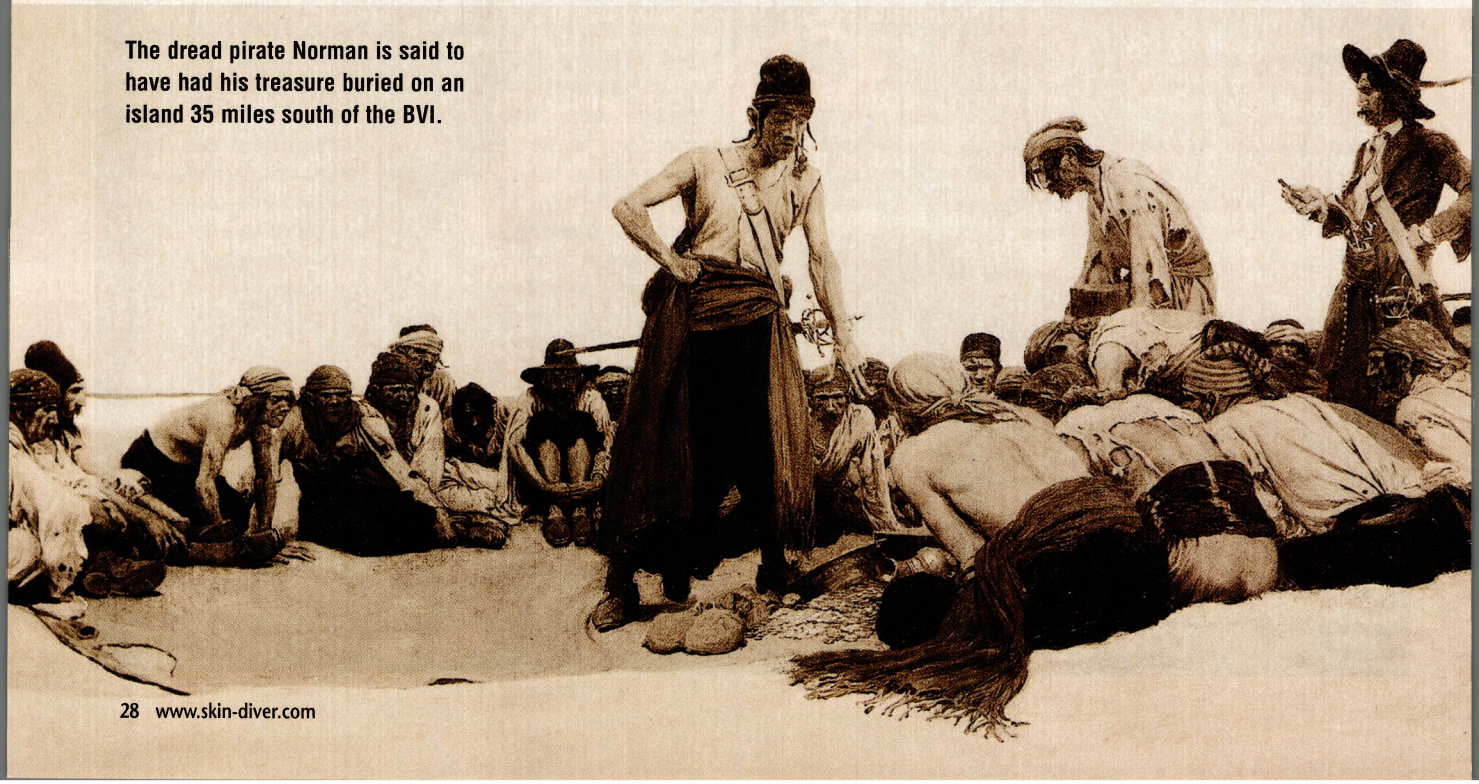
WENDY TAYLOR OF CHARLOTTE Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, asks: "What's the story on the treasure of Norman Island?"

The story can be found in two books: *Tales of Tortola and the British Virgin Islands* by Florence Lewisohn and *Letters From the Virgin Islands*, author unknown. Norman, a buccaneer who operated out of Anegada, northernmost of the British Virgin Islands, purportedly buried his treasure on an island (later named for him), 35 miles to the south. In 1750, still another treasure trove was reported on Norman Island, supposedly dug up by residents of nearby Tortola. The gold, silver, indigo and tobacco were reported to be riches sunk off the coast of North Carolina. The treasure, as the story goes, had been taken off the galleon before it sank and loaded aboard another vessel. This ship was intercepted by pirates who stole the cache and hid it on Norman Island. Today, explorers on the island see holes scattered about, where eager treasure buffs have searched throughout the years. Some claim that the island is the setting for Robert Lewis Stevenson's famous tale, *Treasure Island*. One of the four caves at Treasure Point fits Stevenson's description of where "Mr. Fleming found his treasure." The caves are dark and eerie, with phosphorescent patches on the ceiling, bats fluttering around and the whoosh of surging tides. Except for a curious visitor from a sailboat anchored off the point or tourists visiting from Tortola, the bats have the caves and the treasure, if any, to themselves.



CAPT. CARL FISMER OF Tavenier, FL, recently found a shipwreck, not a pirate vessel, but one that captured its share of booty. The Dutch warship, *Eendracht* raided coastal towns off Cuba in 1624 and captured a Spanish galleon before it sank in a storm off Ft. Myers, FL. Fismer, who works with treasure salvor Sir Author Clark (author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*), says there has never been a Dutch vessel, manned by a Dutch crew, salvaged in the Western Hemisphere. (In 1995, Clive Cussler found the *Prinz Mauritz*, a Dutch flute lost in 1652 off Long Island. He gave the position coordinates to officials of the U.S. Park Service, but they failed to do anything with them.) Fismer and his crew, working with marine archaeologist Duncan Mathewson, will conduct research on the *Eendracht*. *Go to Capt. Fismer's Spanish Main Company website www.treasureco.com for more information.*

JUDY SCOTT OF FLINT, MI, IS interested in the *Troy*, a 163-foot cargo/passenger vessel that sank in Lake Huron in 1859. The *Troy*, a hard-luck ship that survived two collisions, three groundings and a major fire, lost 23 of her 26 passengers and crew in what old-timers call "a perfect hurricane." Discovered by Chris and Pam Roth



The dread pirate Norman is said to have had his treasure buried on an island 35 miles south of the BVI.

in 1998, the 100-foot-deep wreck lies four miles northwest of the Port Austin Reef Light, Huron County, MI. The hull, somewhat broken up, sits on an even keel with a single cylinder engine rising 20 feet off the bottom. A five-bladed prop rests nearby, accompanied by a fire box with charred wood in it. *The Troy's history can be found in* Inland Sea Journal, *Vol. 56, No. 4, Winter 2000.*

MANY THANKS TO Bill Hughes of State College, PA, and Bill Schmoldt of Brielle, NJ, for responding to my plea for information on shipwrecks off Sable Island, Nova Scotia. I forwarded everything to Darlene Cooper, who is trying to trace the *Geiser*, a ship that brought her grandmother to America in 1888.

Bear with me once more in my plea for information on another wreck, the *Franjack*, sunk off Pigeon Islets, Guadeloupe, French Antilles. Chantel Hamel of Quebec, Canada, experienced two exciting dives, one on the *Franjack* and one on the *Gustavia*, both sunk off Guadeloupe. I found particulars on the *Gustavia*, a 160-foot freighter sunk as an artificial reef in 1991. Launched as the *Geoceanique* in 1953, it was damaged by Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and sunk three years later in 130 feet of water. Let me know if you have information on the *Franjack*, and I'll pass it on to Chantel in Quebec.

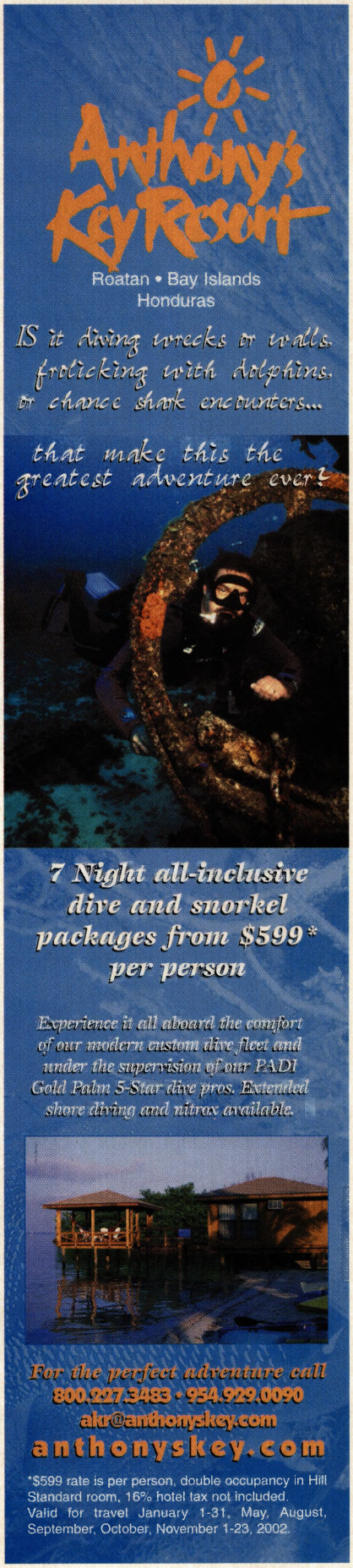
DEBBIE SUTTON OF GLENDALE, CA, IS planning to dive the *Star Of Scotland*, sunk in Santa Monica Bay, and wants to know how it got there.

First, a little background information on the 1,250-ton ship that had seven other names during 24 years of service. She was commissioned in 1918 as the Royal Navy's HMS *Mistletoe*, disguised as a merchant vessel, but fortified with hidden guns and depth charges to thwart German U-boat attacks during World War I. She became a Mexican merchant ship, first as the *Chiapas* and later *La Playa De Ensenada*, transporting general cargo and fruit from Panama to California, from 1921 to 1924. In 1930, the 262-foot ship became just *La Playa*, a notorious gambling establishment cruising off Baja. Three years later, adding prostitution to her itinerary, she was renamed *City Of Panama*, endured a scandalous murder, and continued under yet another name, *Star Of Hollywood*. After a stint of inactivity in San Pedro Harbor, the vessel emerged again as a gambling casino called the *Texas*. It wasn't until 1940 that the name *Star Of Scotland* appeared, this time as a fishing barge anchored in Santa Monica Bay. Two years later, its seams leaking, the barge sank in 70 feet of water, providing an excellent wreck site for divers and fishermen. Although the decks have collapsed, causing clutter and debris, divers still retrieve an occasional artifact and spear some of a dozen different species of fish that call the wreck home.

> Today, explorers on [Norman Island] see holes scattered about, where eager treasure buffs have searched throughout the years. Some claim that the island is the setting for Robert Lewis Stevenson's famous tale, *Treasure Island.*

BILL CLEARY, VIA THE INTERNET, ASKS about a sunken Nantucket lightship and wants position coordinates if they're available. *The Encyclopedia of American Shipwrecks* lists the *Aloma, LS 117*, a Nantucket lightship built in 1924 and owned by the state of Massachusetts. The 60-ton vessel, rammed by another ship in a fog in 1931, foundered in a channel south of Nantucket. Coordinates might be available from the Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources in Boston or the U.S. Coast Guard, Washington, D.C.

Send your wreck questions to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Rd., White Hall, MD 21161. Be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a personal reply. Ellsworth can also be e-mailed at: ellsboyd@aol.com.







DIVECLUBNEWS
EDITED BY RYAN ALLEN

Orlando Reef Divers

ORLANDO REEF DIVERS IS A group of divers interested in recreational diving, as well as environmental awareness and conservation. In recent months, members have traveled to dive destinations such as Bonaire, Truk Lagoon, Roatan and Grand Turk, as well as West Palm Beach and Pompano Beach, FL. Plans under consideration for the upcoming year include Cayman Brac, the Florida Keys, return trips to Bonaire and Grand Turk, and numerous weekend trips to the reefs in South Florida. Meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of each month, and include a social hour along with presentations and speakers.

For more information, check out the website at www.orlandoreefdivers.org.

The HammerHeads: A Diver Making Machine

AS THEY PUSH ON INTO 2002, THE HammerHeads will begin a new phase of development. They will go beyond the focus of having a good time and a good dive, and become a tool for recruiting brand-new divers. They hope to not only invigorate the diving industry, but also create a fresh and enthusiastic dive community.

The new recruitment program presents a multi-tiered challenge to the members, and any diver can benefit from getting a new diver started. Individual recruiters will be recognized and entered into prize giveaways. Chapters will get competitive, as the leading group's Head Hammer will become a VIP guest at the DEMA Show 2002.

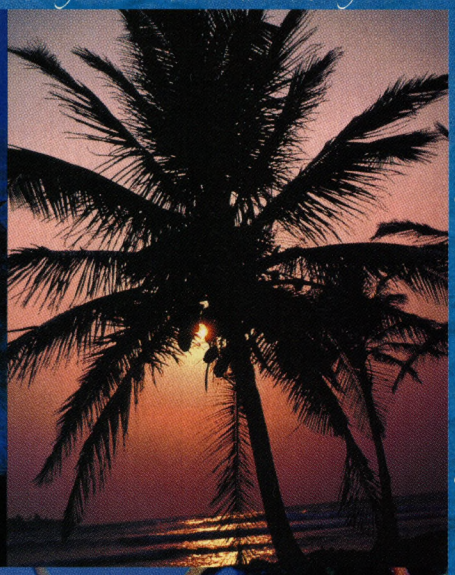
For info on the HammerHeads' Go Get A Diver program, contact Lydia Eldridge at (858) 616-6408, or e-mail lydiae@dema.org.

Send your club news to allenr@primediacmmg.com.

Cayman Islands • Cayman Islands • Cayman Islands • Cayman Islands • Cayman

By Marty Snyderman









Photos by Marty Snyderman

The Cayman Islands

A Photographer's Playground

Ask a group of seasoned underwater photographers what they are looking for when they plan their dive vacations and you are likely to get responses that spill over with enthusiasm and conviction. No doubt, you will hear requests for warm, aquamarine water, great visibility, colorful marine life, walls that plummet into the cobalt blue depths, fascinating animal behaviors, intriguing macro subjects, wrecks, variety and a chance to experience some big animal encounters.

Many underwater photographers also appreciate helpful hints from knowledgeable divemasters and boat operators about where and how to look for various marine animals, and they want to dive with boat crews that know how to care for camera equipment. Some photographers want the opportunity to get their film processed on location and those using rechargeable batteries want the reassurance that their equipment will be compatible with the destination's electrical supply. Access to back-up gear, the opportunity to take a class and to get film professionally processed will likely be high on the lists of some shooters.

CAYMAN ISLANDS
Grand Cayman • Cayman Brac • Little Cayman
www.divecayman.ky

Cayman Islands • Cayman Islands • Cayman Islands • Cayman



Cathy Church's Underwater Photo Centre & Gallery

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CAYMAN ISLANDS
Grand Cayman • Cayman Brac • Little Cayman





Of course, many photographers love to create topside images as well. So beautiful white sand beaches lined with palm trees and pieces of driftwood are in high demand as are settings that provide the opportunity to film the local wildlife. Close-ups of colorful birds and other topside creatures are known to please their audiences.

In short, what photographers want is a trip to any or all of the Cayman Islands. Not all photographers are aware of it, but the preceding list of requests is the Cayman Islands in a nutshell as Grand Cayman, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac offer everything a photographer could possibly hope for. The reason I feel comfortable making that statement is that not only have I visited the Cayman Islands on numerous occasions over the years, but I have also dived and photographed many other world class destinations. After almost thirty years of diving I find myself working in trips to the Cayman Islands as often as I can because so many of my favorite images were created there.

Those photographs include wonderfully colorful seascapes with sea fans and sponges adorning vertical walls, moments with tarpon and memories from mornings spent photographing southern stingrays at Stingray City and the nearby Sandbar in the North Sound on Grand Cayman. As long as I live I'll never get enough opportunities to photograph Little Cayman's Bloody Bay Wall and work the shallows of Jackson's Bight where I have created images of sea turtles, nurse sharks and spotted eagle rays feeding in the sand as well as jawfish and sand tilefish tidying up their burrows. The same is true for the colorful schools of snappers and grunts that inhabit the reefs of Cayman Brac. Many of my most prized fish portraits and photographs that depict animal behavior that ranges from all of the fascinating activity at cleaning stations to spawning sponges have come from all three islands.



But enough about my experiences, let's consider what you can look forward to when you go on vacation to this photographer's playground. For starters, there are the 80-plus degree water temperatures and the great water conditions along with a variety of sites that are located around each of the three islands. This means no matter which way the sea breezes come from you can always find great diving. On an average day the visibility in the shallows will likely be between 60 and 100 feet, and when conditions are at their best 200 foot plus viz along the walls is as common as curious angelfishes and conch salad.



The Cayman Islands is literally the top of an undersea mountain that rises sharply up some 5,000 feet from the sea floor. This geographical phenomenon means that all three islands are surrounded by dive sites that are only minutes away by boat, and in many locations you can walk out of your hotel room and

CAYMAN ISLANDS
Grand Cayman • Cayman Brac • Little Cayman



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Join us for the ultimate full-service dive vacation. Cobalt Coast Resort is a new, intimate oceanfront resort where European grace meets Caribbean style. Together with Dive Tech you will be treated with personalized attention that is second to none. Located on the Northwest shore of Grand Cayman, you'll leave the masses behind and enjoying pristine shore diving from 2 great locations and uncrowded boat dives. Dive Tech offers a variety of exceptional dive packages. Dive Tech also specializes in SCR/CCR Rebreathers, Scuba/Free Diving/Tek Training, Air/Nitrox/Mixed Gas, and Scooters.

CAYMAN ISLANDS
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Treasure Island Divers

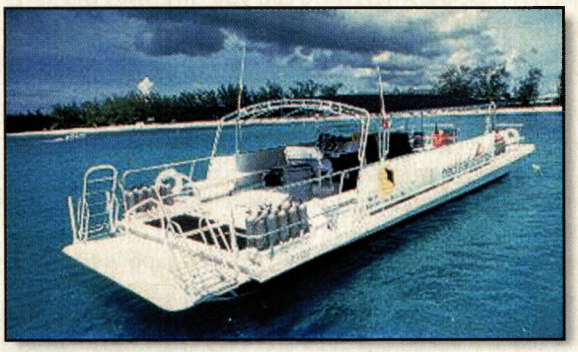
P.O. Box 30975 Grand Cayman, BWI
Toll Free U.S. & Canada: (800) 872-7552
Tel: (954) 351-8998 • Fax: (954) 351-9740
Web: tidivers.com
E-mail: tidivers@diveres.com

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Atlantis
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Cayman Islands
Tel: 345-949-7700
E-mail: atlantis@candw.ky
Web: GoAtlantis.com/cayman

Join us on an incredible voyage of discovery to depths of 1000 feet aboard the Atlantis Deep Explorer research submarines. Two passengers sit in front of a huge 3-foot diameter viewport that is your window into this rarely viewed world. Powerful lights illuminate the brilliant colours and bizarre shapes of the "spongebelt" at 200 to 400 feet. Diving deeper, 650 to 1000 feet, you encounter enormous pinnacles that provide refuge to a host of unusual deep-sea creatures.



red sail sports
Tel: (877) 462-3567
E-mail: redsail2@candw.ky
Web: www.redsailcayman.com

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** Some restrictions apply

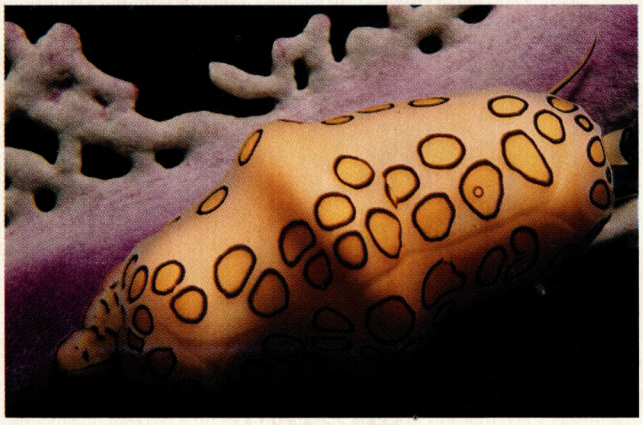
CAYMAN DIVING SCHOOL

Cayman Diving School

Tel: 345-949-4729
E-mail: skindiver@caymandivingschool.com
Web: www.caymandivingschool.com

It's our 15th birthday and we have lots of fun planned for 2002! Cayman Diving School specializes in teaching - from introductory diving courses to instructor, recreational or technical @ we even have our own course director. Visit our brand new dive shop on 7 Mile Beach and let our dive staff show you the dive of your life! Check out our web site for monthly specials.

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swim right off the beach. Stunning coral reefs that teem with life can be found only a few yards offshore and vertical walls are less than 500 yards away.

Well known as "must do's" within the community of underwater photographers, the walls and drop-offs in the Cayman Islands are well deserving of all of the worldwide publicity they receive. The tops of sheer drops are as shallow as 25 feet in a number of sites all along the Bloody Bay Wall on Little Cayman, and all of the vertical faces are alive with massive hard corals, soft corals, colorful sea fans and sponges. In many places the walls are undercut with myriad tunnels and swim-throughs providing ideal backdrops for wide-angle shooters. Everywhere you look there is some sea creature that is just begging to be photographed.

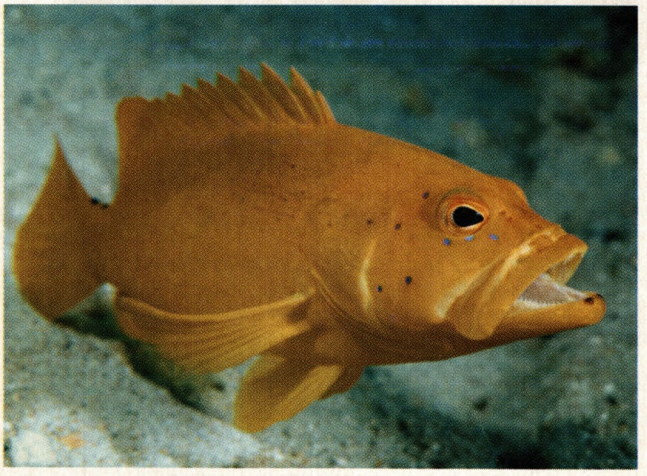
For many underwater photographers and videographers, it is the variety of exciting subject matter that makes the Cayman Islands such an exceptional destination. Color abounds, and as any photographer soon learns, color is a magical ingredient that can turn a snapshot into a photograph. Eye catching red, orange, yellow or green sponges, sea fans and coral heads surrounded by inviting hues of blue make the sea look like an artist's pallet. Big groupers, barracudas, colorful parrotfish, four handsome species of anglefish, butterflyfish and schools of horse-eye jacks, snappers and grunts are part of the seascape almost everywhere one dives. Mix in the rest of the 750 species of rainbow colored fishes and the only limiting factor is your photographic imagination. All you have to do is set it free!

Like many photographers and videographers, I am especially appreciative of opportunities to photograph animal behaviors. In the Cayman Islands you are sure to find active cleaning stations where gobies, wrasses, juvenile anglefish, and shrimps help rid groupers, 'cudas, parrotfish, snappers and more of ectoparasites, dead tissue, bacteria and fungi. As pleasant as this must be for the fishes that receive the cleaning, it is equally so for photographers who are looking for great subject matter! Mating sergeant majors, spawning sponges, remoras hitching rides on turtles and fishes, trumpetfish shadowing groupers and tarpon pursuing schools of silversides are the types of subject matter that make our photographic juices flow. Better yet, the more you dive in the Cayman Islands, the more behaviors you are sure to discover and want to film.

You don't want to overlook the night diving photo opportunities. After the sun sinks below the horizon you're likely to find an octopus or two and perhaps some squid, an orange ball corallimorph, feeding corals, gorgeous flame scallops, delicate shrimps, crabs and lobsters as well as moray eels on the hunt. Bright red squirrelfish and glass-eye snappers. Mingle with sleeping turtles next to snoozing fishes. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the potential subject matter when shooting on the wrecks of the m/v Captain Keith Tibbetts, a re-named Russian Destroyer, that is one of Cayman Brac's most popular sites, and the Oro Verde and Balboa, a wonderful night dive, in waters off Grand Cayman.

Clearly the list of potential subjects and dive sites goes on and on. There are enough predictable subjects to allow you to plan and enough encounters with surprising subjects to keep you looking around for the unexpected. Encounters that are possible, though rare, in so many other destinations are common at dive sites throughout the Cayman Islands. For example, take those graceful southern stingrays along with their entourage of bar jacks, snappers and goatfish that follow along in hopes of picking up a meal. They are, of course, permanent residents at Stingray City and the Sandbar. They are part of almost every dive at Little Cayman's Jackson's Bight as well as so many other places. Sure, you might see southern stingrays in other Caribbean destinations, but you have a better chance of winning the lotto than of cavorting with them like you do in the Cayman Islands. Or, where else can you dive with the silver bullets we know as tarpon at more than a dozen sites on such a predictable basis!

A feature that is easy to overlook in the planning stages of a vacation, but that is often greatly appreciated by photographers during the trip is the availability of photo services. The good news is that no matter what your needs are, whether in still photography, digital or video, the Cayman Islands can accommodate them. You can easily find most consumer films, batteries and other supplies in many

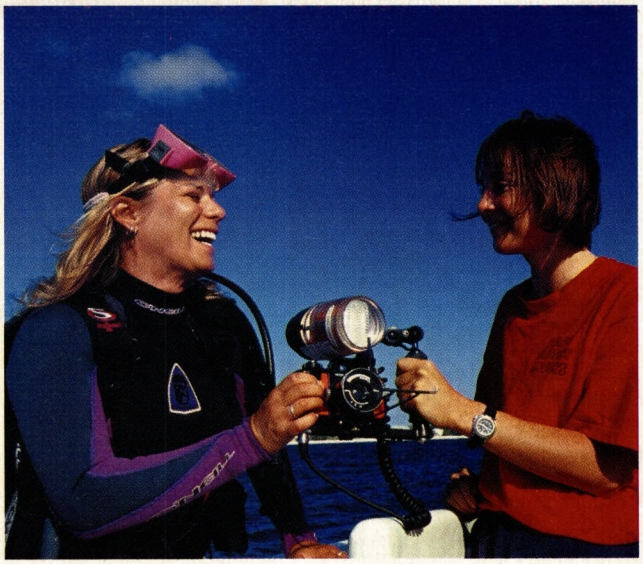


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of the larger hotels, shopping centers and photographic specialty shops on each of the three islands. If you find yourself in need of something that is more underwater specific, all you need to do is pay a visit to one of the on-island professional dive centers where you will find a good inventory of supplies and accessories that can be purchased or rented. Film developing and photo courses are readily available if that is what it takes to make your vacation special. In short, when it comes to photographic and video services and supplies, the Cayman Islands are the state-of-the-art. Here's a list of the dedicated underwater photo and video suppliers:

Grand Cayman	
Caribbean Producer Services Cathy Church Underwater	345-949-6844
Photo Centre & Gallery	345-949-7415
Fisheye of Cayman	800-887-8569
Red Sail Sports Photo/Video Center	345-949-8745
Cayman Brac	
Reef Photo & Video Center	345-948-1340
Photo Tiara	345-948-1553
Little Cayman Reef Photo & Video Center	345-948-1063

With almost every conceivable underwater photographic opportunity you are likely to experience when vacationing in the Cayman Islands the best approach is to relax and enjoy the wonders the island waters have to offer. Just know that with all the amazing images you will capture there will be a vast array of different opportunities awaiting you for your next trip to the Cayman Islands. There has never been a better time to go, and when you do, I am certain you will have more photo opportunities than you ever dreamed possible.

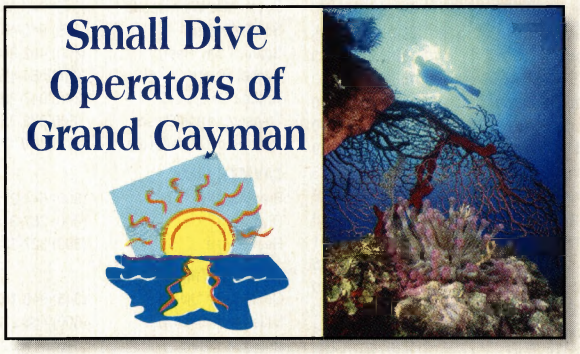




Don Foster's Dive Cayman

Tel: (800)-83-DIVER
George Town Shop: (345) 949-5679
Comfort Suites Shop: (345) 946-DIVE
Fax: (345) 945-5133 • E-mail: dfd@candw.ky
Web: www.donfosters.com

Conveniently located in George Town harbor, we depart for daily 2-Tank and 1-Tank dives. This location is great for instruction and has an excellent shore dive on the wreck of the Cali (see photo). Our boats at our private dock in Snug Harbor take you directly to the North Wall and Sting Ray City. Complimentary dvie shuttle from your hotel/condo! We are the in-house dive operator at the Comfort Suites, 7 Mile Beach, let us create the ideal dive package for you!



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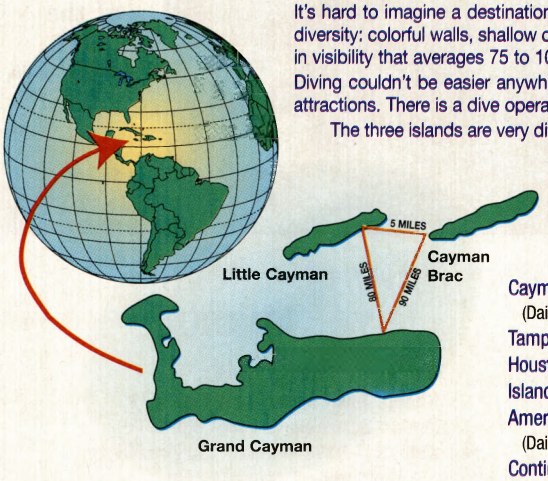
Paul at DIVE 'N STUFF, Tel: 1-345-94-SCUBA
Mobile: 1-345-916-2490
e-mail: divenstuff@cayman.org website: www.divenstuff.com

Danny at OFF THE WALL DIVERS
Tel: 1-345-945-7525 Mobile: 1-345-916-0303
e-mail: fish@candw.ky website: www.otwdivers.com

Peter at Peter MILBURN'S DIVE CAYMAN LTD.,
Tel: 1-345-945-5770 Mobile 1-345-916-0814
e-mail: pmilburn@candw.ky

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GETTING THERE/GENERAL INFORMATION



It's hard to imagine a destination that offers dive travelers more than the Cayman Islands. Underwater there is incredible diversity: colorful walls, shallow coral reefs, new and old wrecks, and friendly, photogenic marine life. Divers enjoy all of this in visibility that averages 75 to 100 feet and water temperatures from 79° to 83°F.

Diving couldn't be easier anywhere. The topside dive services are state of the art and just as diverse as the underwater attractions. There is a dive operation to suit every need, every budget and every wish.

The three islands are very different. Little Cayman and Cayman Brac are sparsely populated and quiet. Grand Cayman offers a little of everything. The capital of George Town has every modern amenity but there are quiet, laidback areas as well.

While great dive destinations often require difficult travel, the Cayman Islands are easily reached–being just a little more than an hour's (jet) flight away from Miami! The following is a list of carriers that provide air service to the islands:

Cayman Airways: Miami - Grand Cayman (Daily/Non-stop, with connections to Cayman Brac)
Tampa - Grand Cayman (Non-stop)
Houston - Grand Cayman (Non-stop)
Island Air: Inter-island (Daily)
American Airlines: Miami - Grand Cayman (Daily/Non-stop)
Continental Airlines: Newark, NJ - Grand Cayman (Non-stop)
Delta Air Lines: Atlanta - Grand Cayman (Daily/Non-stop)
Northwest Airlines: Detroit - Grand Cayman (Non-stop - Winter Only)
US Airways: Philadelphia - Grand Cayman (Non-stop)
Charlotte - Grand Cayman (Non-stop)
Air Canada: Toronto - Grand Cayman (Non-stop))
Air Jamaica: Kingston - Grand Cayman (Daily/Non-stop)
British Airways: Heathrow - Grand Cayman (Non-stop)



www.divecayman.ky

Scuba Services

GRAND CAYMAN

Ambassador Divers	(345) 949-8839
Aquanauts Ltd.	(800) SUNNUTS
Beach Club Divers	(800) 482-3483
Bob Soto's Reef Divers	(888) 695-7400
Capitol's Surfside	(345) 949-7330
Capt. Marvin's	(345) 945-4590
Cayman Aggressor IV	(800) 348-2628
Cayman Diver	(345) 945-4593
Cayman Diving Lodge	(800) TLC-DIVE
Cayman Diving School	(345) 949-4729
Cayman Glide Divers	(345) 945-2711
Cayman Marine Lab	(345) 945-5586
Celebrity Divers	(345) 949-3410
Clint Ebanks Scuba	(345) 949-3873
Dive 'n Stuff	(345) 949-6033
Dive Tech	(345) 949-1700
Dive Time Pirates Inn	(345) 947-2339
Divers Down	(345) 945-1611
Don Foster's	(800) 833-4837
Eden Rock Diving	(345) 949-7243
Fisheye of Cayman	(800) 887-8569
Neptune's Divers	(345) 945-3990
Ocean Frontiers	(800) 544-6576
Off The Wall Divers	(345) 945-7525
Ollen Miller	(345) 947-6606
Peter Milburn	(345) 945-5770
Quabo Dives	(345) 945-4769
Red Sail Sports	(877) 733-7245
Rivers Sport Divers	(345) 949-1181
Scuba Sensations	(800) 767-0445
Seasports	(345) 949-3965
Seaview Dive Centre	(345) 945-0577
Seven Mile Watersports	(345) 949-0332
Soto's Cruises	(345) 945-4576
Spanish Bay Reef	(800) 482-3483
Sunset Divers	(800)854-4767
Tortuga Divers Ltd.	(345) 947-2097
Treasure Island Divers	(800)872-7552
Turtle Reef Divers/Divetech	(345) 949-1700

CAYMAN BRAC

Brac Aquatics Ltd.	(800) 544-2722
Dive Tiara	(800) 367-3484
Reef Divers	(800) 327-3835

LITTLE CAYMAN

Conch Club Divers	(345) 948-1026
Little Cayman Diver II	(800) 458-2722
Paradise Divers	(345) 948-0001
Pirate's Point	(345) 948-1010
Reef Divers	(800) 327-3835
Sam McCoy's	(800) 626-0496
Southern Cross Club	(800) 899-2582

Watersports

GRAND CAYMAN

Abanks' Watersports	(345) 945-1444
Atlantis Submarines	(800) 887-8571
Bayside Watersports	(345) 949-3200
Best Value Charters	(345) 949-1603
Black Princess Charters	(345) 949-0400
Capt. Alfonso's	(345) 949-1012
Capt. Asley's	(345) 949-0354
Capt. Bryan's	(345) 949-0038
Capt. Crosby's	(345) 945-4049
Capt. Gleason Ebanks	(345) 945-2666
Capt. Marvin's	(345) 945-4590
Capt. Ronald Ebanks	(345) 947-3146
Cayman Delight	(345) 949-8111
Cayman Mama	(345) 916-1847
Cayman Mermaid	(345) 949-8100
Cayman Skyriders	(345) 945-5965
Cayman Sunset	(345) 949-3666
Cayman Windsurf	(345) 947-7492
Charter Boat Hdq. Ltd.	(345) 945-4340
Clinton's Watersports	(345) 949-1016
Dallas Ebanks	(345) 945-4340
Diver's Supply	(345) 949-7621
Ernie Ebanks	(345) 945-4340
Fantasea Tours	(345) 949-2182
Frank's Watersports	(345) 945-5491
Gleason's Watersports	(345) 916-1502
Island Girl Charters	(345) 947-3029
Jackie's Watersports	(345) 945-5791
Jolly Rogers Cruises	(345) 945-7245
Just Fish'n	(345) 916-0113
Kelly's Watersports	(345) 949-1193
Kirk Sea Tours, Ltd.	(345) 949-6986
Malcolm's Watersports	(345) 949-1323
Oh Boy Charters	(345) 949-6341
One Day at a Time	(345) 947-2244
Peacemaker Charters	(345) 916-2478
Planet Ocean	(345) 949-9423
Red Baron	(345) 945-4744
Red Sail Sports	(345) 949-8745
Sailboards Caribbean	(345) 949-1068
Seaworld Explorer	(345) 949-8534
Stingray City	(345) 949-9200
Sundancer Cruises	(345) 945-1726
The Valhalla	(345) 949-8988
Wet & Wild	(345) 949-9180
Whittaker's Sportfishing	(345) 916-0944
Xanax Sailing Cruises	(345) 949-1186

CAYMAN BRAC

Capt. Edmund Bodden	(345) 948-1228
Capt. Lemuel Bodden	(345) 948-1314
Capt. Steve Bodden	(345) 948-2517
Shelby's Charter Boat	(345) 948-0535

LITTLE CAYMAN

Capt. Frankie Bodden	(345) 948-1428
Sam McCoy's	(345) 948-0026

U/W Photo & Video

GRAND CAYMAN

Caribbean Producer Service	(345) 949-6844
Cathy Church	(345) 949-7415
Fisheye of Cayman	(800) 887-8569
Red Sail Sports Photo/Video Ctr	(345) 949-8745

CAYMAN BRAC

Ed Beaty's Reef Photo	(345) 948-1340
Photo Tiara	(345) 948-1553

LITTLE CAYMAN

Ed Beaty's Reef Photo	(345) 948-1063

CAYMAN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

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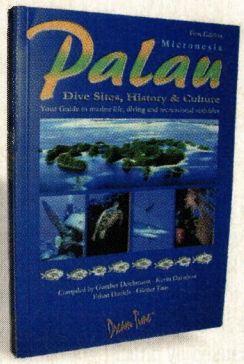
GRAND CAYMAN 345-949-0623 • CHICAGO 847-678-6446 •
HOUSTON 713-461-1317 • MIAMI 305-266-2300 • NEW YORK 212-682-5582
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UNITED KINGDOM 44-207-491-7771

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Welcome to the Diver's Library, where each month we bring you the latest in diving media.

RARELY DOES SOMEONE COZY UP TO A travel guidebook for mere enjoyment. The usual scenario involves scanning the pages for highlights or looking up specific information. And frankly, when I sat down with *Palau Dive Sites, History and Culture,* I wasn't expecting to do much more. But once I dipped into the world conveyed through the 238 images spread generously throughout 151 pages, I was hooked and found myself reading the guide from cover to cover. An enjoyable learning experience—how can this be so?

The stunning photography is key, but it's the coverage of the dive sites that most impresses me. Each site is given a detailed write-up (including depth, level of experience, terrain, marine life, ideal times and tides for diving), accompanied by at least one photo of the location. Together, the text and images provide the reader with an accurate idea of what visitors can expect, better yet, look forward to.



This type of comprehensive coverage extends beyond the diving to cover all aspects of Palau and adeptly conveys a sense of personality—of both the place and the people that inhabit it.

The guide opens with a letter from the Republic of Palau's President, who attributes in part the prolific beauty of the area to the Palauan culture's "role as stewards over our precious heritage and the sea's magnificent bounty…." There is even a separate section for the Palau Conservation Society, which gives readers a heads-up on underwater etiquette for both the divers' and marine creatures' safety.

The scientific names of marine life are included, as well as discussions on Palau's history and culture, maps, emergency contact information and a directory of hotels, dive and tour operators.

Palau Dive Sites, History and Culture
by Gunther Deichmann, Kevin Davidson, Ethan Daniels & Gunter Taus
Published by Dream Time
(632) 523-3179, e-mail: gunther@gdeichmann.com

The success of this guide lies largely in the four men who collaborated to bring it together—experts in the fields of photography, marine biology, environmental preservation as well as avid divers. These are men who fell in love with Palau themselves and have relocated to live there or nearby.

If you only have the time and/or space for one guidebook on Palau, check out this one. It's an impressive combination of beautiful photography and valuable information.

For information on how to submit a product for review in Diver's Library, contact Ryan Allen at allenr@primediacmmg.com.



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PADI
padi.com

by the editors

the hot



1 SEAQUEST RAIDER BC

Built and billed as a BC to take on the world, the Raider has an impressive stat sheet: 50 pounds of lift in back-mounted wing-style bladders; four air dumps; six stainless, heavy-duty D-rings; and a 32 pound weight capacity. Also tricked out with a self-adjusting lumbar support and torso adjusting systems, it combines brute strength with comfortable grace. **SeaQuest: (760) 597-5000, www.sea-quest.com**



2 SHERWOOD TREK FINS

The Sherwood Trek is a split-fin design with plenty of backbone. A firm grade of Duoprene provides good snap and is also incredibly resilient to UV rays and the other abuses suffered by scuba gear. Well-designed foot pockets easily accept bulky drysuit boots and the adjustable fin strap is simple to don, thanks to an oversized triangular finger hole. Available in two colors: blue and gray. **Sherwood: (800) 347-9766, www.sherwoodscuba.com**



3 VERSA-LITE MARKER LIGHTS

Trade in your chemical light stick for a battery-powered Versa-Lite. Made to attach anywhere, they use 100,000-hour bulbs and last 30 hours (flashing model) or 12 hours (steady burn model) between battery changes. Super bright orange-red light is great for keeping track of buddies underwater or on the surface. **Innovative Scuba Concepts: (800) 472-2740, www.innovativescuba.com**

4 BODY GLOVE INSOTHERM DIVESUIT

New from Body Glove is the Insotherm fullsuit. Anatomically cut and pre-bent design ensures a great fit while the flatlock construction means quality that will last. This .5 mm suit is the perfect protection and added touch of warmth needed in tropical waters or for layering in colder climes. Also available in a men's version. **Body Glove: (800) 678-SURF, www.bodyglove.com**

5 SEA & SEA MX 10 CAMERA SYSTEM

The venerable MX 10 from Sea & Sea comes in a great deluxe system, which includes the detachable YS-40A strobe, an external viewfinder and three lenses: close-up, wide-angle and macro with framer. Not pictured, but an outstanding addition to the system, is a new fiber optic cable that allows the strobe to be hand-held off to the side of the camera. This enables divers to eliminate annoying backscatter caused by direct lighting. All of the components can be packed in a rugged case for easy travel. **Sea & Sea: (760) 929-1909, www.seaandsea.com**

6 AERIS ATMOS 2 CONSOLE

Nitrox compatible and with a host of features, the Atmos 2 computer from Aeris is being offered in a slick new console that also incorporates a pressure gauge, compass and (in the back) a small dive knife. The computer itself has user programmable alarms for ascent rate, max depth, remaining time and more. There is a gauge-only mode, time and date stamps on downloaded dives (up to 255) and it's all communicated through an easy to use display incorporating large numbers and bar graphs. **Aeris: (800) 647-0605, www.diveaeris.com**



7 SNORKEL BOB KIDS GEAR

Snorkel Bob's kids gear is made from the same materials and designs as the adult counterparts, only on a smaller scale. The result is outstanding quality. The Li'l Mo Betta mask features a soft silicone skirt, rugged mask strap and top grade lenses, while the Li'l Bubba Snorkel comes complete with a purge valve, water-deflecting hood and soft mouthpiece. And, it's all sized just right for the wee water lover. **Snorkel Bob: (800) 262-7725, www.snorkelbob.com**

list MUST-HAVE GEAR FOR THE NEW SEASON

8 MOBBY'S TWIN SHELL PRO DRYSUIT SYSTEM

Distributed exclusively by Parkway Scuba, Mobby's Twin Shell PRO is really two suits in one. An inner shell keeps the diver dry, while the outer shell, made from tough 1,000 denier Cordura nylon, provides protection from the rough and tumble outside world. The two shells are joined near the zipper and valves by industrial strength Velcro, so the diver only "puts on" one garment. However, this system allows for great flexibility. If the outer shell becomes worn, it can be replaced much more cheaply than buying a new drysuit. The outer shell can also be easily customized with extra pockets, belt loops or embroidery of organization names. Other features of the PRO include U/V protective cuffs and collar to shield the suit's latex seals, a waist belt to minimize air shifting around the suit while diving and ankle straps to keep air from rising to the diver's feet when inverted.

Keeping the diver warm is both the inner shell and Mobby's Thinsulate drysuit undergarment (inset photo). The inner shell is a Trilaminate design that combines heat-reflective materials with the flexibility and durability of special vinyl fabrics. The inner shell also uses Super Latex seals, which offer the great elasticity of latex with incredible strength. **Parkway (800) 587-2822, www.parkwayscuba.com**

9 CRESSI-SUB AIRTECH REGULATOR

Cressi-sub's Airtech regulator is available with either a balanced diaphragm first stage or balanced piston first stage. The second stage (yes, also balanced) offers two levels of adjustability, one for inhalation resistance and one for venturi assist, that allow divers to tweak the reg's performance on the fly. **Cressi-sub: (800) 338-9143, www.cressi-sub.com**

10 UK LIGHT CANNON 100 DIVE LIGHT

High Intensity Discharge capability in a hand-held design is what separates the Underwater Kinetics Light Cannon 100 from the rest of the field. Eight C-cells power a 10-watt bulb of ionized gas to produce a beam closer to the color temperature of the sun and equivalent in strength to a 25-watt bulb. Burn-time on fresh batteries is three to four hours. Both pistol grip and lantern style handles are available. **Underwater Kinetics: (858) 513-9100, www.uwkinetics.com**

11 MARES PEGASUS BC

Packed with new technology, the Pegasus uses a material called Ultra-Tex on the front of the jacket, which has an ultra low drag coefficient. It also incorporates the Airtrim pneumatic valve system for buoyancy control. One button inflates the BC and another opens dump valves at the top and bottom of the vest. Mares has even developed a new weight integration system made from injection molded pieces. It can be fitted with any shape or style of lead, and easily holds 28 pounds. **Mares: (800) 874-3236, www.mares.com**



12 AQUA LUNG LEGEND REGULATOR

The Legend is the foundation for Aqua Lung's top performing regulator line. An "over-balanced" first stage promises superior performance at all depths, while the black, polyurethane sheath protects exterior metal surfaces from damage. An environmental dry chamber helps prevent regulator freezing in extreme conditions. The balanced second stage has a large venturi lever, for easy manipulation, and the unit's lightweight design significantly reduces jaw fatigue. **Aqua Lung: (800) 775-3483, www.aqualung.com**

13 DACOR DARWIN COMPUTER

Housed in a compact console, the brand-new Darwin computer operates in three possible modes: air, nitrox and bottom timer. Bottom time indication reads in minutes and seconds and the entire display can be backlit. The Darwin logs 50 dives and profiles in its memory, with 20-second point intervals (max 38 hours) and has an easy-to-use dive simulator. Both audible and visible alarms notify the diver of ascent rate, remaining deco time, etc. **Dacor: (800) 323-0463, www.divedacor.com**

14 HARVEY'S KOBALT TITANIUM WETSUIT

Harvey's highly popular Kobalt Titanium wetsuit line is available in 3, 5/3 and 7/5 mm thicknesses, in styles from one-piece jumpsuits, to two-piece jacket and farmer john, and shorties. The titaniumfoil neoprene, which reflects heat back to the body, and the bent knee and elbow, flat-stitched seam construction makes this one of warmest and most comfortable wetsuits available. The slick lining also makes donning and doffing a breeze. Available in all black or black with royal blue accents, the Kobalt line offers 18 stock sizes and wetsuits can be custom made for the perfect fit. **Harvey's: (206) 824-1114, www.harveys-divesuits.com**

15 SEA DREAMS DIVE DIVA WETSUITS

Sea Dreams, which manufactures wetsuits designed exclusively for women, offers both style and function in their 3 mm two-piece Dive Diva suit. Constructed of quick-drying ultra-stretch neoprene, it has four-way stretch capability. All seams are double glued and blind stitched in black with either Vase Sponge Pink or Caribbean Blue binding. Excellent for use in 70°F and above water. Sizes 4 to 14.
Sea Dreams: (949) 338-0748, www.seadreamswetsuits.com

16 OCEANIC FLEX BC

Oceanic's new Flex BC comes with a QuickLock integrated weight system that uses two dumpable weight pockets, as well as two non-dumpable pockets behind the shoulders for fine tuning buoyancy. An expandable BioFlex material helps reduce chest squeeze. The interior is padded and lined with velour for comfort. In addition to the shoulder air dump, there is also an innovative bottom dump with the pull tab in the front. Lift capacity ranges from 13 to 35 pounds (XS to XL). **Oceanic: (510) 562-0500, www.oceanicworldwide.com**

17 IDEATIONS DIVE ALERT

A mini-air horn and powerful signaling device, the Dive Alert from Ideations is a great addition to a diver's safety gear. To get the attention of boats or other divers while on the surface, simply press the little red button and an ear-piercing sound is made (be careful to point this away from other divers close by). Dive Alert can be heard up to one mile away. **Ideations: (206) 281-0067, www.divealert.com**

the hot list

MUST-HAVE GEAR FOR THE NEW SEASON

18 COCHRAN COMMANDER COMPUTER

Attention Tek Heads: This computer is for you! The Cochran Commander can be programmed for air or nitrox diving, for using one gas or two gases (for decompression stops), and for calculating dive limits according to either FO_2 (fraction of oxygen) or PO_2 (partial pressure of oxygen). This means you can do an open-circuit deco dive, followed by a rebreather dive, followed by another open circuit no-deco dive, and one computer tracks everything. Cochran has also blessed this little gem with an "adaptive algorithm" that automatically tracks a wide range of environmental parameters (altitude, ascent rates, temperature, etc.) and adjusts dive times accordingly. **Cochran: (972) 644-6284, www.mcochran.com**

19 IKELITE HOUSING FOR NIKON COOLPIX

Ikelite's Digital Housing #6190 for Nikon CP5000 is molded of clear polycarbonate to provide seamless construction and corrosion-proof performance. The clear housing affords views of the LCD screens and camera controls. Controls are provided for each function of the camera. The housing has a threaded port which accepts Inon and Sea & Sea wide-angle lenses. An external Ikelite TTL connector and an internal TTL hot-shoe for the camera allows any Ikelite TTL Substrobe to work directly with the camera. **Ikelite: (317) 923-4523, www.ikelite.com**

20 HENDERSON TITANIUM HYPERSTRETCH WETSUITS

The Titanium Hyperstretch Full Core Combo includes both a full jumpsuit and a core warmer, designed to be worn over the fullsuit, and will help prevent water flow through the rear zipper as well as provide additional thermal protection to the torso. Available in three thicknesses for all water temperatures. **Henderson: (856) 825-4771, www.hendersonusa.com**

21 AQUA COLOR MASK

Using a unique technology that incorporates two different lens shades, the Aqua Color mask brings out underwater colors normally lost on shallow reefs. Multiple designs cover a full spectrum of dive conditions. **Aqua Color: (800) 298-0160, www.aquacolor.com**

22 ZEAGLE FLATHEAD VI REGULATOR

The Flathead VI boasts outstanding performance in any conditions, thanks to a balanced diaphragm design that includes a dry environmental seal and a second stage with diver-adjustable controls to manage breathing resistance. The second stage is also lightweight, for less jaw fatigue, and designed to be resistant to freeflow while at the surface.
Zeagle: (813) 782-5568, www.zeagle.com



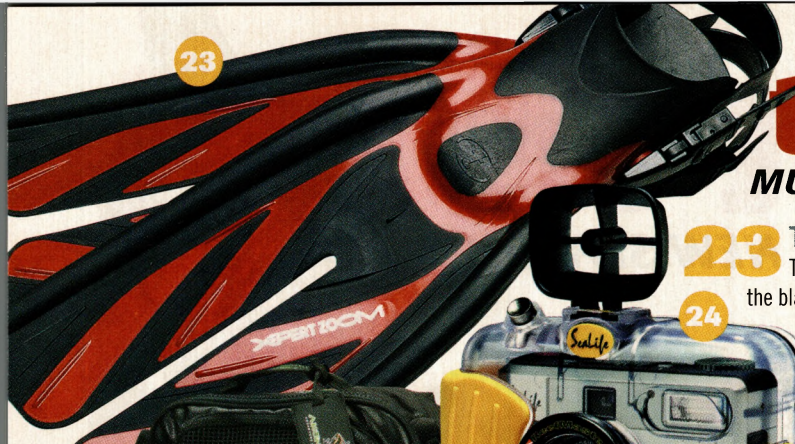






the hot list

MUST-HAVE GEAR FOR THE NEW SEASON



23 TUSA X-PERT ZOOM FINS

TUSA has augmented their split-fin design with two battens on each half of the blade, providing a good balance between stiffness and flexibility. A noticeably angled foot pocket helps keep the fin at the most efficient position throughout a diver's kick cycle, and well-designed quick release buckles make the X-pert Zoom as easy to take off as it is to kick. **TUSA: (562) 498-3708, www.tusa.com**



24 SEALIFE DIGITAL CAMERA

The new SeaLife ReefMaster Digital Camera can be set to three different exposure programs: Land, Sea and Sea with external flash. Shots are displayed in a 1.8-inch monitor and the rechargeable batteries last up to two hours or approximately two dives. The camera also accepts all SeaLife macro and wide-angle lenses and some external flashes. It has been tested to 200 feet. Accessories include batteries and charger, A/C converter, MGI Photo Suite software, USB cable, video cable and care kit. **SeaLife: (813) 257-7742, www.sealife-cameras.com**



25 AKONA ROLLERBAG

Akona's RollerBag comes loaded with accessories, such as a regulator bag, console sleeve, travel wallet, toiletry bag and water bottle. To ease the travel troubles, features include an extension pull handle with a zippered cover, a fold-away travel sleeve to keep contents confidential during travel and padded backpack straps. Additional pluses are dual exterior pockets for fins, corrosion-proof zippers, heavy-duty, rust-free wheel assemblies and reinforced skid rails. **Akona: www.akona.com**

26 PRINCETON TEC SURGE DIVE LIGHT

This new light from Princeton Tec was designed with size in mind, and fits easily and comfortably in your hand. It's powered by eight AA batteries in a parallel configuration, which keeps battery space to a minimum and pumps out a solid 8 watts, sufficient for a variety of diving scenarios. The Surge is also designed with a flip switch that's easy to operate while wearing gloves and is waterproof to 500 feet. **Princeton Tec: (609) 298-9331, www.princetontec.com**



27 SCUBAPRO TITANIUM REGULATOR

The S600T/MK25T titanium regulator system is a high-performance Porsche among breathing apparatuses. The MK25T flow-through piston design first stage features a forged titanium yoke with titanium body and components. It has five LP ports on a swivel, two HP ports, and has externally adjustable intermediate pressure. The lightweight, compact S600T second stage features inhalation and venturi controls for fine tuning air delivery for the least amount of effort, regardless of depth. **Scubapro: (619) 402-1023, www.scubapro.com**

28 BARE VELOCITY WETSUITS

BARE's Velocity wetsuit will not leave you feeling *bare* when it counts—underwater. Available in both jumpsuit (3 mm) and shorty (2 mm), it incorporates hydrostretch panels for maximum comfort and durability. Glideskin on the wrists, collar and ankles seals in warmth. Additional features include a lumbar panel for lower back support and knee pad protection. Available in a wide variety of sizes and colors. **BARE: www.bare-wetsuits.com**

PHOTO: (BARE WETSUITS) GREG JOHNSTON



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BODY GLOVE INTRODUCES THE FIRST WETSUIT WITH A SMOOTHSKIN MEMBRANE



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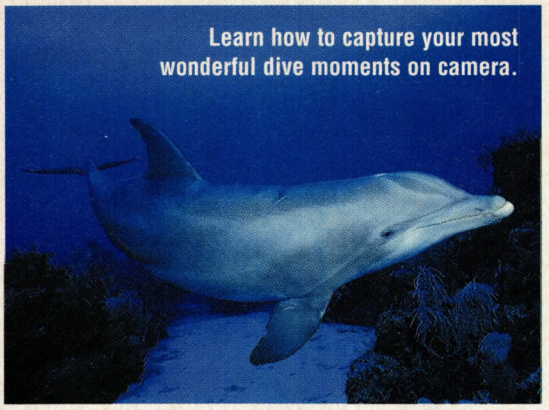
BODY GLOVE WETSUITS

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SKINDIVERONLINE

Learn How to Shoot Like a Pro from a *Skin Diver* Editor

BY MICHELLE DANNER



HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE photographers on the dive boats? I'm always impressed by their equipment and dedication. It's not easy lugging around dive gear, and I can't imagine the large cameras make it any easier. But however daunting the equipment might be, learning to shoot underwater photography could be a fun challenge.

I'm pretty good at figuring out shutter speed and f-stops for topside photos. But it took some time to find the right equipment and to learn shooting techniques above the surface, so I would assume it must be a challenge below. You can't just dive in and snap photos. Well, you can, but it would probably be a waste of film.

That's why Marty Snyderman's School of Underwater Photography online course is a good start. Marty, a field editor for *Skin Diver* magazine, has put together an online course that allows you to take your time to learn underwater photography so that you'll feel confident when you actually get wet.

The course consists of nine sections:

1) The Photographic Fundamentals
2) Secrets To Compelling Composition
3) Matching Your Equipment and Your Expectations
4) Problems and Problem Solving in Underwater Photography
5) Macro Magic
6) Creating Powerful Silhouettes
7) Successful Wide-Angle Photography
8) How To Photograph Reef Creatures
9) Course Review: Putting It All Together

Each interactive class has a quiz at the end that you can grade yourself, then decide whether to move on to the next class or to review the current one.

Log onto **www.skin-diver.com** and find Marty's class via *Skin Diver* links. Find out more about the classes, sign up and start shooting.

PHOTO: MARTY SNYDERMAN

WINNER: DIVE TRIP TO MALDIVES

Congratulations to Sheryl Cordova from Sunnyvale, CA, USA. She was the lucky winner of Skin Diver Online's most recent contest. Sheryl won a trip to the Maldives with a prize package that included diving for two, 13 nights double-occupancy accommodations and more.





The best deals in the Caribbean will be yours this summer when you take part in the upcoming Cayman Islands H2GO summer promotion. From May 1 to October 31, you'll enjoy great rates on hotels and villas, as well as special deals island-wide on water sports, dive trips, dining and more. Watch for details this spring, and get ready for what promises to be the best summer yet. **www.caymanislands.ky/h2go**

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The Fringe Benefits of Uncivilization—*SKIN DIVER*'S CABO DIVE FIESTA

A HANDFUL OF CENTURIES AGO, adventurers journeyed to the Baja Peninsula with the goal of introducing civilization to the native Pericú Indians. Today, travelers head there, to the towns of Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo, with hopes of leaving civilization far behind. Although Cabo remains a far cry from the crowded confines of Cancun, civilization is creeping in, in the form of luxury hotels and top-notch diving services. And this past August, *Skin Diver* readers got a taste of both sides of this Mexican getaway at the 3rd Annual Cabo Dive Fiesta.

The fiesta kicked off with a party at the Hotel Solmar. *Skin Diver* Field Editor Marty Snyderman whet divers' appetites with a presentation on diving in the Sea of Cortez to prep participating divers for the week's upcoming underwater adventures. And Amigos Del Mar and Underwater Diversions made sure that there were plenty of those, including day trips to Gordo Bank and Cabo Pulmo, a night dive off Pelican Rock, as well as a sunset cruise aboard the live-aboard *Solmar V*.





Numerous raffles and a treasure hunt made winners of everyone.

The week was also packed with prize giveaways and social events. Raffle prizes included TUSA Xpert Zoom split-fins, Dacor regulators, Pelican lights, Harveys' wetsuits, SeaVision color correcting masks, T-shirts, hats and hotel packages. Everyone left with something—make that multiple! Divers were also able to test the latest in dive technology with free equipment demos, including Dacor's HUB BC system, Sea & Sea cameras, a variety of SeaVision masks and Harveys Titanium Cobalt wetsuits.

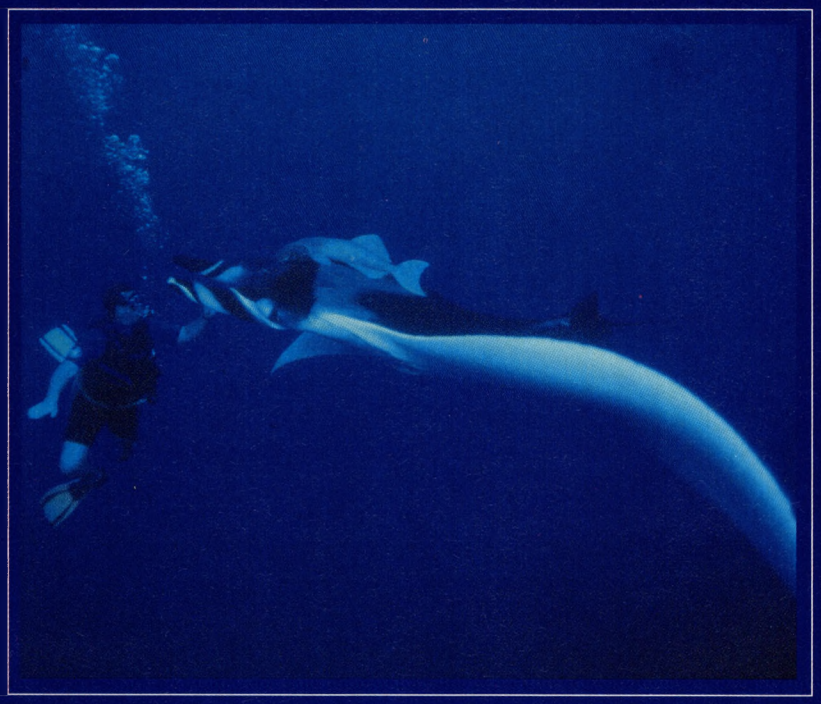
Two activities that had everyone diving were an underwater photo contest and a treasure hunt. The treasure hunt had such great prizes that non-fiesta participants were trying to sneak their way in. One participant (we'll call him "Fred") even went so far as to encourage other divers into forming an alliance with him so that they could get the most coveted of the goods. Marylin Batt (a photo contest winner) summed up her week with, "Good people, good diving, festivities and lots of freebies!" Grand prizes for the two events included free accommodations at Fiesta Americana and Melia San Lucas for return trips to Cabo.

The town of Cabo has plenty of topside diversions to offer revelers as well,

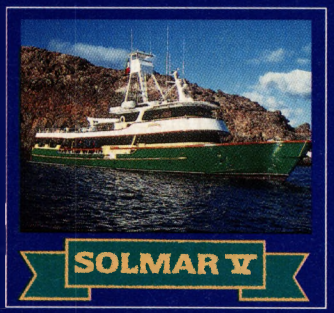
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PHOTOS: TRACEY ORDWAY

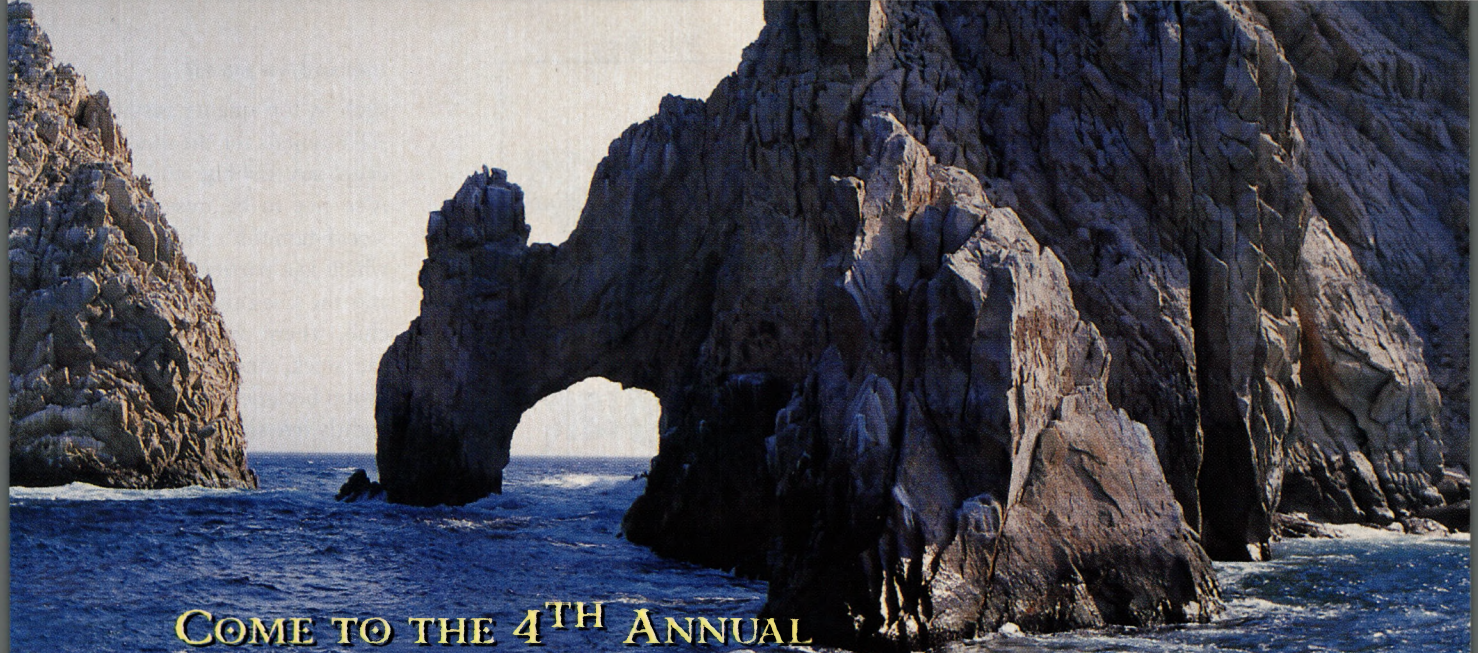
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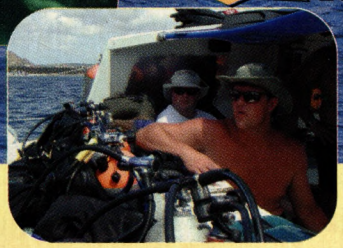
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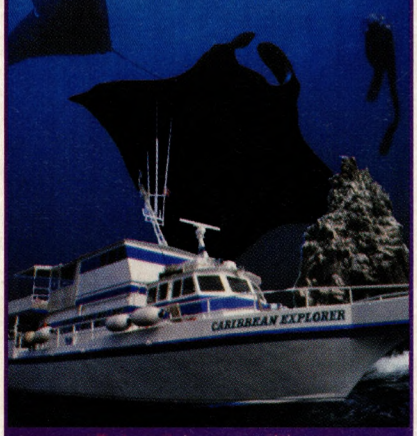
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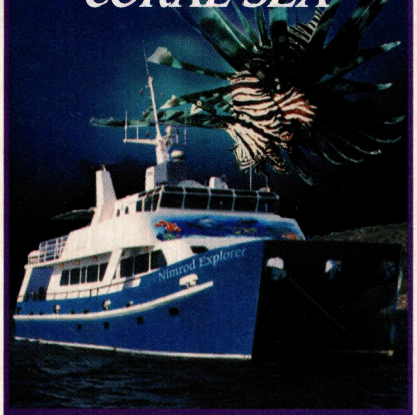
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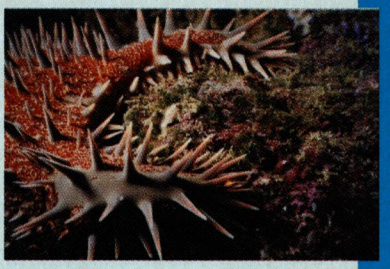
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Award winning patented technology
Fabulous fit
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FREEFLOW

(continued from page 48)

such as top-quality restaurants, ATV rentals for the sand dunes, deep sea fishing and golfing. Also not to be missed are the world-famous Squid Row, which is a partier's theme park, and the Giggling Marlin night-club, where over the course of the week, one member of the group became a fixture on stage in the nightly live shows.

UNDERWATER PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



1ST Place
Dan Poirier - Philadelphia, PA



2ND Place
Marylin Batt - Windsor, CA



Best Moment
Bob Hein - Vancouver, WA

And, for visitors interested in the region's history, they can check out a mural marking the spot where the Pericú Indians burned a mission in rebellion against a ban on nakedness and polygamy. (Clearly, yet another instance where the local culture should be preserved.) —Ryan Allen

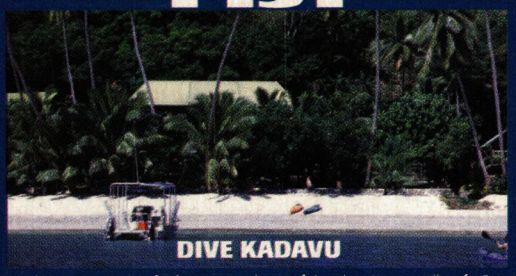
To be a part of this year's event, call (800) 729-7234 ext. 2, or visit www.skin-diver.com.

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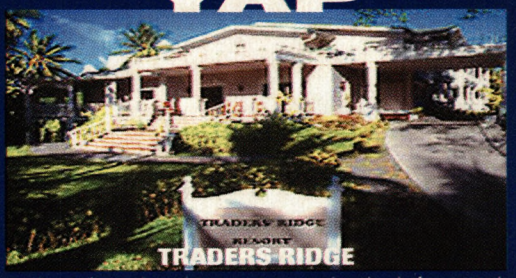
FIJI



DIVE KADAVU

Kadavu is one of the most beautiful islands in all of Fiji. Accommodations are in comfortable Fijian style bures. Kadavu has many remarkable sights. Rain Forest capped hills behind the resort offer many hiking trails. Diving, snorkeling, kayaking, wind surfing, or just relaxing on their beautiful white sand beach directly in front of the resort go hand-in-hand at Kadavu. A true Fijian village located within about a 10-minute walk from the resort is a must-visit. With a wonderful staff of friendly faces to come with the package, this is truly one of the best values in Fiji.Packages should be reserved as far in advance as possible!

YAP



TRADERS RIDGE

Traders Ridge is the only 5 star resort on the island of YAP! With competitive prices to all other resorts on YAP! The only swimming pool on YAP! Personal room steward assigned to your room for your convenience. Resort is styled in unique 1800's Victorian architecture. Cultural tours arranged at resort as well. Come see the famous Manta Rays of YAP and stay in style. Sea Kayaking available at resort as well, as world class diving. This is a perfect combination trip with Palau as well. Call and book your space today!

GRAND CAYMAN



COBALT COAST & DIVE TECH

The newest dedicated dive resort on Grand Cayman. Located away from the hustle & bustle of 7 Mile Beach in the quiet northwest corner of the island! The best shorediving in Grand Cayman is located directly in front of the resort and of course unlimited shorediving included in the dive packages, 2 tank morning boat dives included and afternoon dives available. Swimming pool, Jacuzzi, full service restaurant & bar directly on property. Made to order breakfast daily included in dive packages. There is not a better dedicated-dive property on Grand Cayman!

PALAU



BIG BLUE EXPLORER

A true wonder of the world, with some of the most diverse marine life on the planet. The Big Blue Explorer is the latest live-aboard to sail here. It is also one of the most affordable live-aboards in Palau. At 167 ft. in length it is an extremely stable vessel and is a great choice for either first time live-aboard divers or advanced divers. 9 private cabins with private bathroom facilities, also offering hot and cold water and air-conditioning controlled in each cabin. Meals are served buffet-style and are excellent! Ocean Kayaks are on board for your pleasure, snorkeling can easily be done from this vessel as well. This boat ONLY takes 18 divers so make your reservations early!



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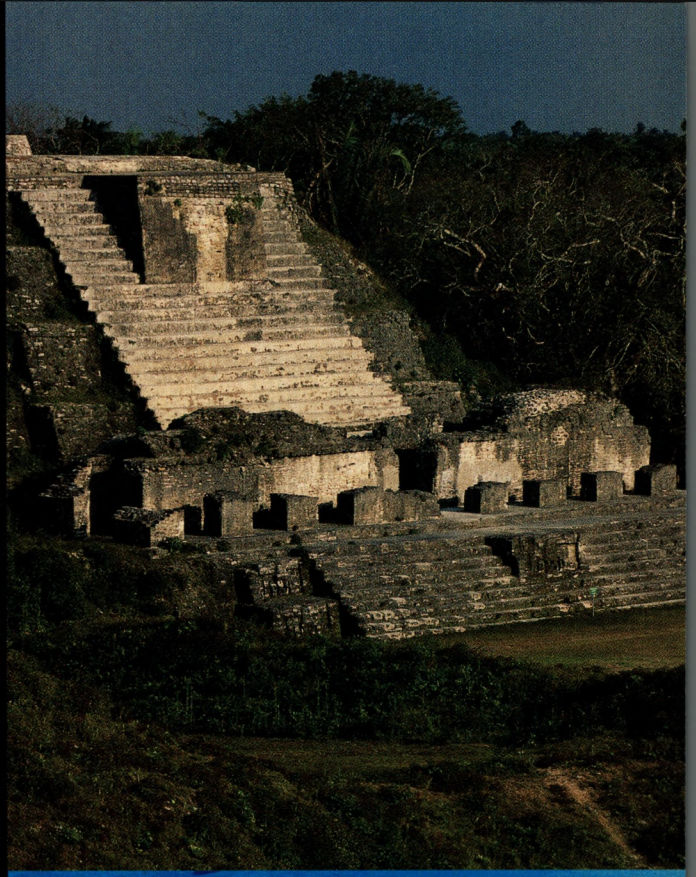
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DIVING THE MAYAN CORRIDOR







Spawned by the will of the Mayan gods, the sea surrounding Riviera Maya, Belize and Cozumel beholds a fertility and diversity that creates awe in all who dive here. Currents feed these lively waters, where over 400 species of fish thrive amidst coral temples. While life abounds underwater, topside exploration unveils ancient Mayan ruins, etched with carvings that lead one to think that even the gods were divers.

PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: BURT JONES AND MAUREEN SHIMLOCK; RICK FREHSEE; CLAY WISEMAN

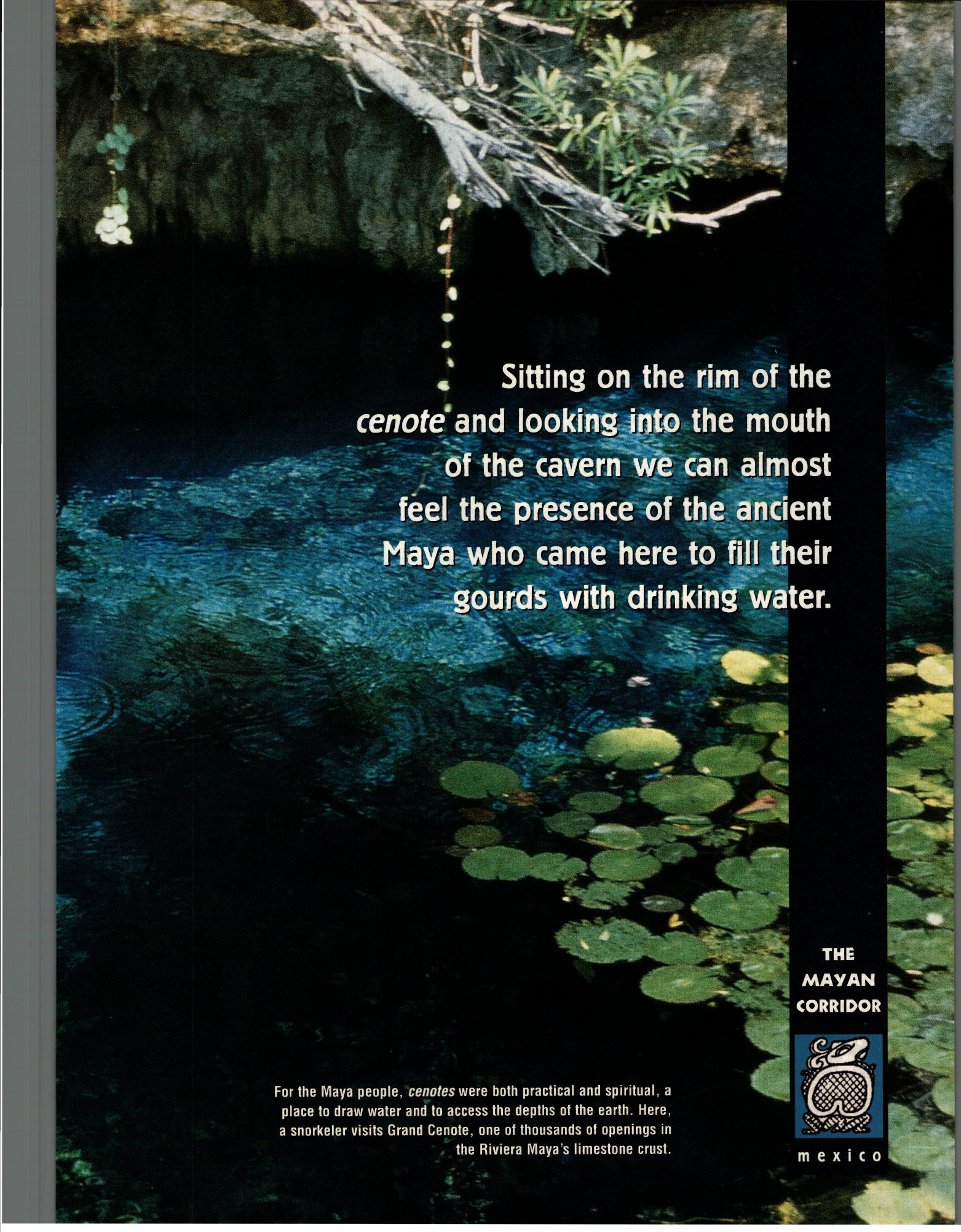
return to the Riviera Maya



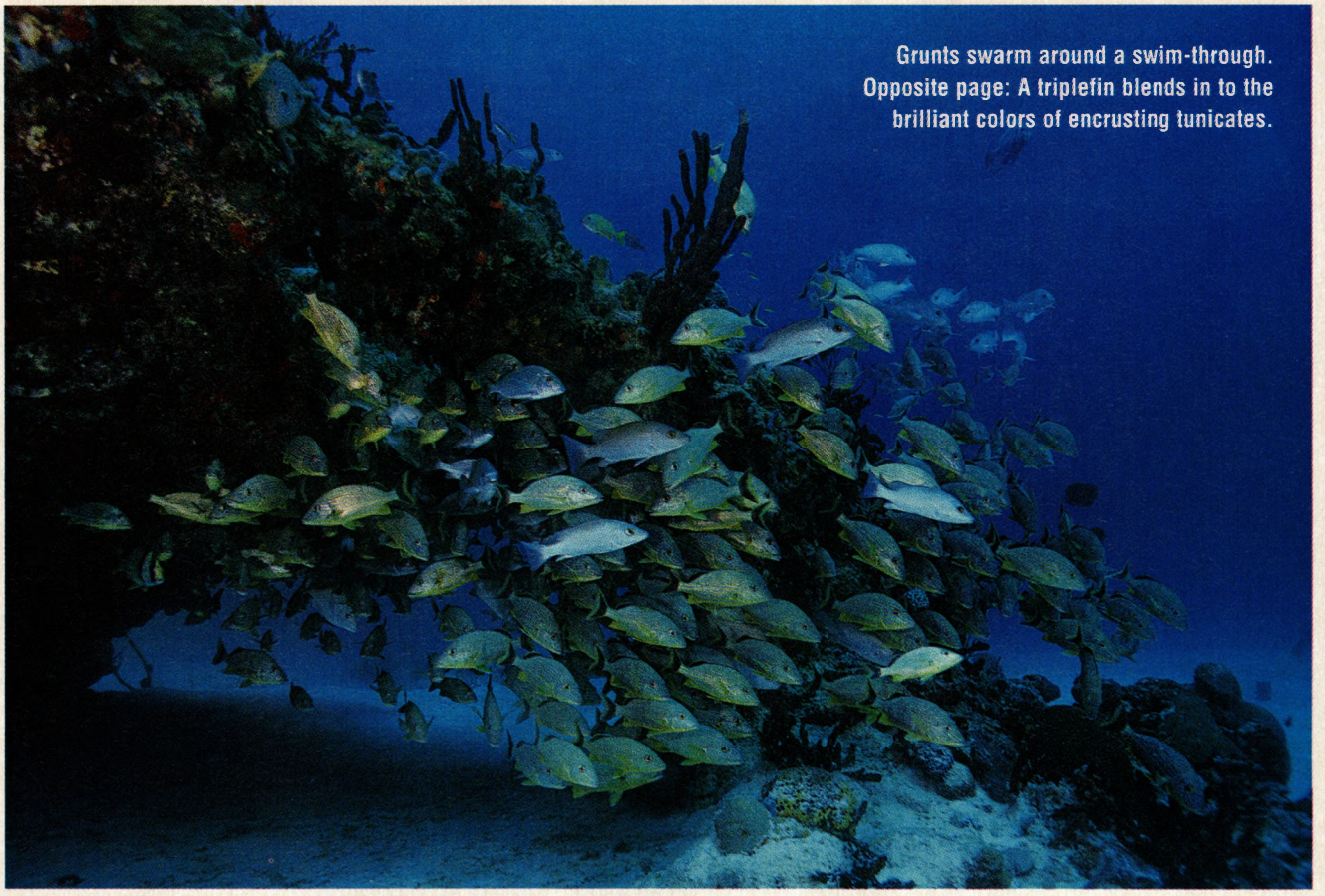
We are soaring, not underwater as usual, but in a small plane, one door open to the warm sultry air rising up from the beaches of Mexico's Riviera Maya. Early morning light floods the cabin and spills out over the ancient city of Tulum, perched on a limestone cliff 50 feet above the Caribbean Sea. Seven hundred years ago, Maya Indians paddled canoes through the barrier reef to sell their fresh catch on Tulum's beaches. From our lofty vantage point, we can see modern travelers in high-speed boats with streamlined hulls weaving in and out of the same 100-mile-long broken ribbon of coral that hugs the east coast of the Yucatan Peninsula.

We flew from Cancun to Tulum and back again to survey the recent tourist boom between the parallel paths of the barrier reef and Mexico's Highway 307. Both flow north-south through the heart of what is now called the Riviera Maya. We lived here and learned to dive on these reefs in the early 1970s. Now we've come back to this coast to visit old friends and some favorite dive sites and, more importantly, to see if we can find a bit of "the way it used to be"—more Maya and less Riviera.

Text and Photography by Burt Jones & Maurine Shimlock



For the Maya people, *cenotes* were both practical and spiritual, a place to draw water and to access the depths of the earth. Here, a snorkeler visits Grand Cenote, one of thousands of openings in the Riviera Maya's limestone crust.



Grunts swarm around a swim-through. Opposite page: A triplefin blends in to the brilliant colors of encrusting tunicates.

Pushing Five Atmospheres

Our old friend Carlos Quintanar is waiting for us at his Cyan Ha Dive Shop on the wide white beach between Hotel Shangri La and Las Palapas Hotel near Playa del Carmen's north end. If anyone knows the reefs around the Riviera Maya, it is Carlos. He has been teaching scuba and guiding divers here for more than 20 years. After big Mexican-style hugs all around, Carlos reminds us that divers who come to the Riviera Maya really see two reef systems: the barrier reef, which is visible from Cancun to just south of Puerto Morelos, then surfaces again around Akumal; and the deeper reef or *cantil* that grows along the continental shelf and drops down into the swift currents of the Yucatan Channel.

We are diving first along the shelf, drifting north past Orange Elephant Ear Sponges as big as Volkswagens and Deep-water Gorgonians enveloped by clouds of damselfish. The current is strong, and because the coral is so prolific, there are few barren spots for handholds. We dive deep to almost 120 feet and have too little time to explore this glorious reef. Ascending through paler shades of blue, we turn and twist to watch a Green Turtle follow us up the buoy line.

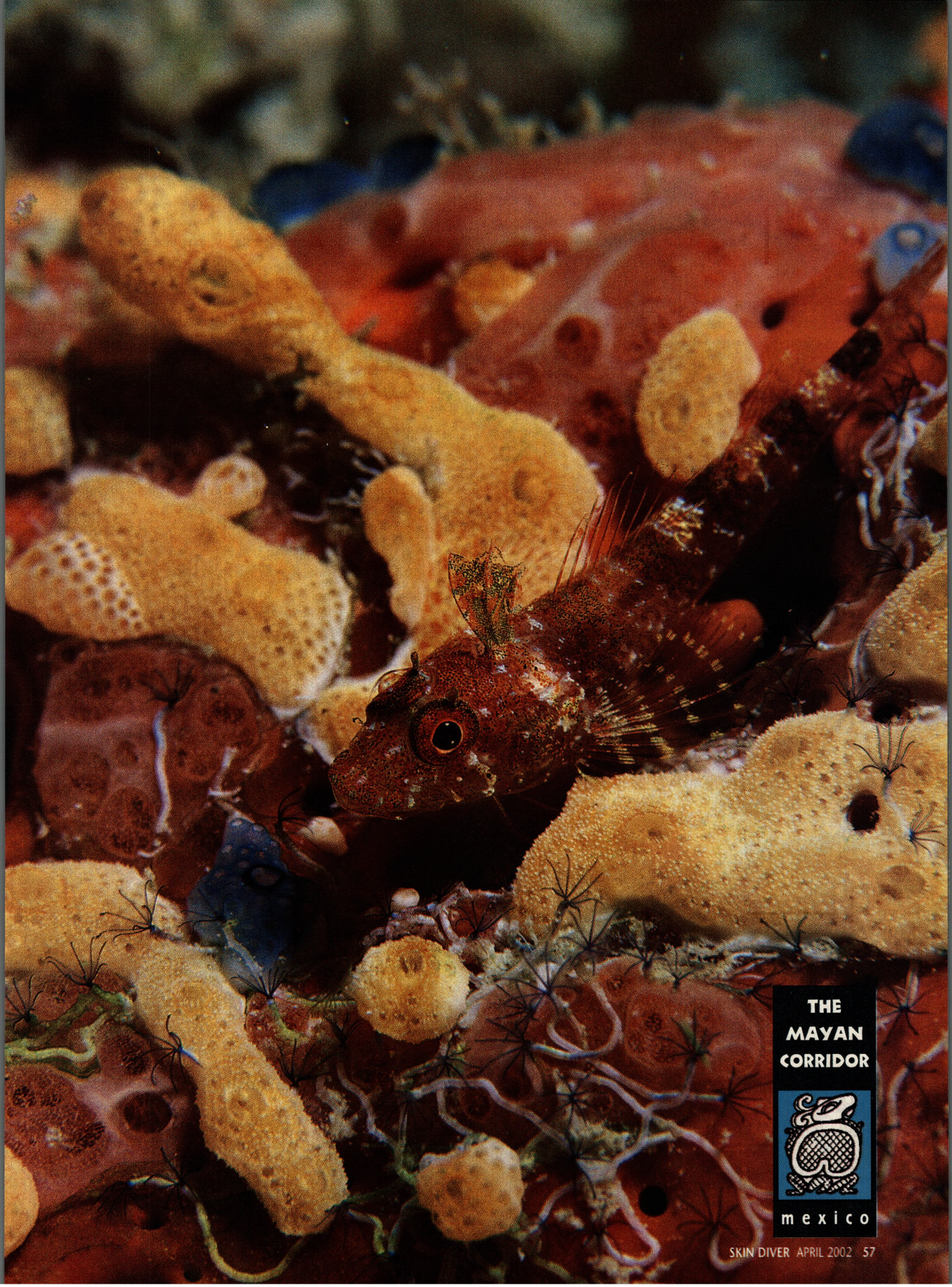
Back on the boat, we feast on Maya barbecue sandwiches, or tortas, of slow cooked pork called *cochinita pibil*. From the sea we have an expanded view of the new construction along the coast. Some hotels, like Las Palapas that has won numerous environmental design awards, are small collections of thatched roof bungalows hidden away amid lush vegetation. Others are massive structures with hundreds of rooms sprouting up among the old growth coconut plantations. The reefs we are diving are not immune to environmental changes caused by development, but proposed legislation could help conserve them by establishing more national marine parks like the one in Puerto Morelos.

We dive at *Moc Chen*, or the Archway, where hundreds of Blue-lined Grunts and Gray Snappers school beneath a sponge-lined swim-through in the reef.

Swiss Cheese

Our second dive is closer to shore and shallower. By mid-morning the sea is calm, almost as if a veneer of blue had been painted over this stretch of the Caribbean. We dive at *Moc Chen,* or the Archway, where hundreds of Blue-lined Grunts and Gray Snappers school beneath a sponge-lined swim-through in the reef. We are so mesmerized by the swaying fish that we spend the entire dive doing doughnuts through the arch.

After the dive, we pile our mountain of equipment into the smaller-than-a-phone-booth car we have rented and head south to dive with another old friend, Kris Lohman,



THE MAYAN CORRIDOR

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THE MAYAN CORRIDOR

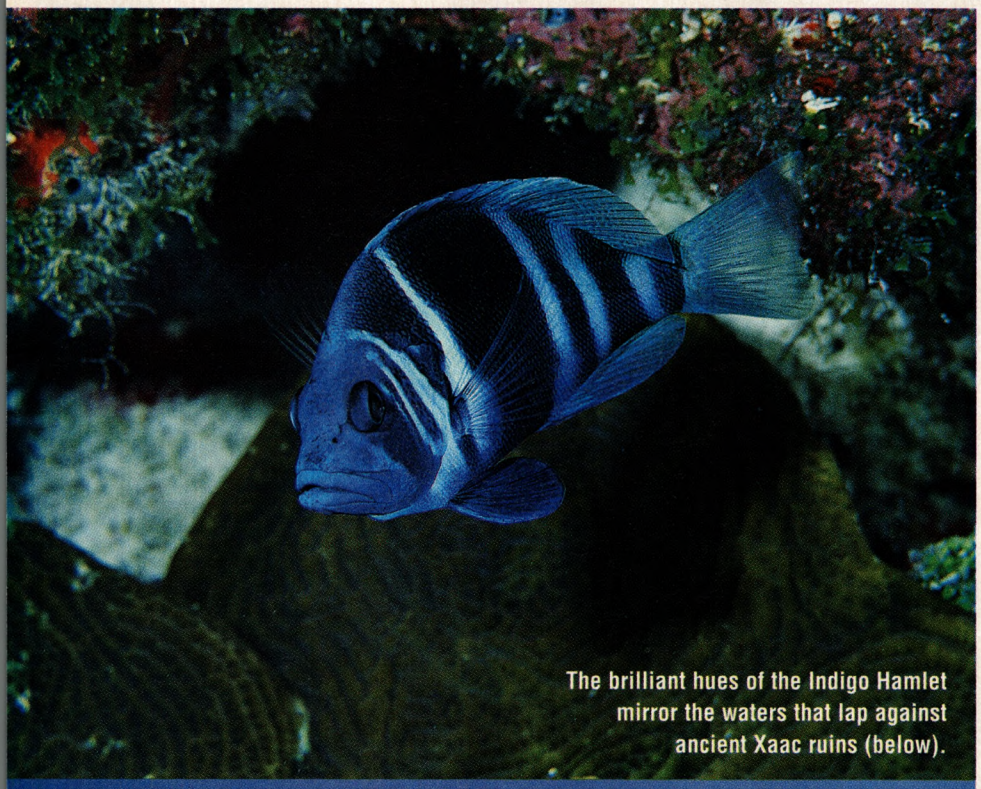
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who operates Akumal Dive Adventures at the Vista del Mar Hotel. Akumal is a funky mix of small hotels, beach bars, private homes and a few larger hotels conscientiously designed to blend into the low-key ambiance. It has been a mecca for divers since the late 1960s when Pablo Bush, Mexico's Jacques Cousteau, discovered the lush reefs lining Half Moon Bay.

Sunlight dappled the sea as we rolled off the dive boat after Kris at Tunnels, a classic spur and grove formation that runs eastward from the barrier reef like fingers pointing to the deeper channel. These coral canyons look like swiss cheese as they are littered with caves and holes which multiply the surface area for smaller animals like fan worms and anemones covered with dancing cleaner shrimp. Pairs of angelfish darted among the towering corals and near a large barrel sponge, Fairy Basslets fed on clouds of plankton. We spent several minutes photographing an Indigo Hamlet who was trading places with a Queen Angelfish in front of our lens. Obviously the guardian of the reef, a large barracuda hung motionless, waiting for the right prey to be drawn in by the currents.

Just after sunset one evening, we strolled over to the Buena Vida Bar and Restaurant. Several people were living dangerously and sipping drinks while swinging from seats suspended from the tall palapa roof. Everyone at the bar was a member of APSA, the Riviera Maya Association of Dive and Watersports Operators. Carlos Quintanar and some of the more experienced operators along the coast formed APSA in 1998 to ensure the safety and quality of watersports activities and to conserve the Riviera Maya's fragile environment.

The meeting's agenda focused on promoting snorkeling and diving tours in the area's *cenotes*. A *cenote*, the Maya word for "well," is a place where the Yucatan's limestone substrate has collapsed, revealing the freshwater aquifer below. After the meeting we make plans to dive with two APSA members, Lina and Gunnar Wagner of Aktun Dive Center, and Buddy Quattlebaum who runs Hidden Worlds Jungle Adventures.



The brilliant hues of the Indigo Hamlet mirror the waters that lap against ancient Xaac ruins (below).



Monkeys, Jungles and Dos Ojos Cenote

Hidden Worlds is the world's largest cave diving and snorkeling park. After

An IMAX film crew recently penetrated deep into Dos Ojos to film *Journey Into Amazing Caves*. But you do not have to put on a tank to explore this *cenote*; the snorkeling is absolutely awesome. As one Brit [said], "It's like God knew this was going to be a tourist attraction."



A diver explores Crystal Cenote. Below: The stone image of a descending (or perhaps, diving) god at Tulum.

introducing us to his tropical menagerie, including a pair of comic spider monkeys named Pepe and Lola, Buddy Quattlebaum takes us on a tour of *Dos Ojos Cenote*, the centerpiece of Hidden Worlds Park. As he maneuvers his jungle buggy over the rough limestone track, Buddy explains that the Yucatan Peninsula is really a very old raised reef that has been blasted by the sun, pounded by hurricanes, and even hit dead center by a meteor whose impact might have changed the planet's climate and killed off the dinosaurs. An IMAX film crew recently penetrated deep into Dos Ojos to film *Journey Into Amazing Caves*. But you do not have to put on a tank to explore this *cenote*; the snorkeling is absolutely awesome. As one Brit on our tour explained to his brood, "It's like God knew this was going to be a tourist attraction."

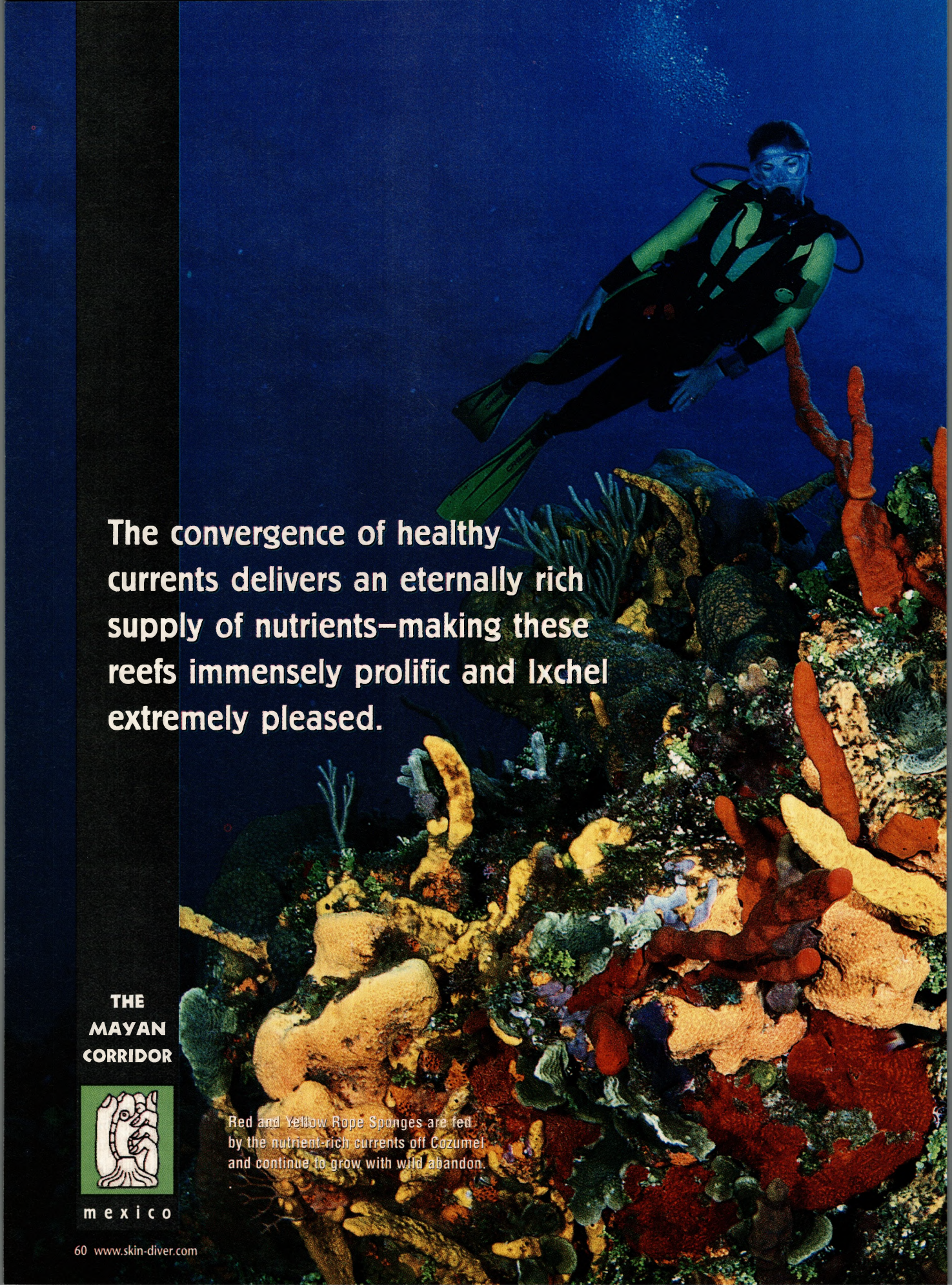
From Hidden Worlds it's only 10 minutes to the outskirts of Tulum and Gunnar and Lina Wagner's Aktun Dive Center, Hotel and Restaurant. After we down several glasses of freshly squeezed grapefruit juice, Gunnar and Lina drive us west for three miles on the same road that leads to the majestic ruins of Coba, then turn right into the gravel-filled parking lot at Grand Cenote. Sitting on the rim of the *cenote* and looking into the mouth of the cavern we can almost feel the presence of the ancient Maya who came here to fill their gourds with drinking water. Beneath the surface, Grand Cenote is a world of suspended animation where the dripping formations of stalactites and stalagmites have been halted by the rising aquifer. We surface through a maze of blooming water lilies and scramble up the handmade ladder to ground level.

Descending Gods

The sun is level with the jungle canopy as we speed down Highway 307 and run through the stone gates of Tulum. Even though Tulum's Maya name is *Zama*, or "Dawn," we think it is just as lovely in the late afternoon when a subtle glow illuminates the Temple of the Frescoes. At the base of the temple, beneath the painting of the royal canoe, a stylized Manta Ray glides through the water. But on the outside of the building is the carving we have rushed to see. It is a



depiction of an upside-down person thought to be a diving or descending god. There are more descending gods here than at any other pre-Colombian site in Mexico. Our guide explains that these deities watch over and protect earthbound humans. Or, as we prefer to believe, the fortunate among us who leave the earth and plunge beneath the waters of the Riviera Maya.


The convergence of healthy currents delivers an eternally rich supply of nutrients–making these reefs immensely prolific and Ixchel extremely pleased.
THE MAYAN CORRIDOR
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Red and Yellow Rope Sponges are fed by the nutrient-rich currents off Cozumel and continue to grow with wild abandon.

diving the Temples of Ixchel

Text and Photography by Clay Wiseman

Between the years 300 and 1600A.D., women from all along the Mayan corridor would make the challenging pilgrimage to Cozumel to pay homage to Ixchel, their goddess of love and fertility. Having traveled many miles on foot and finally by dugout canoe to this small island, they would leave offerings under a graceful stone archway situated at the base of a temple raised to honor her in the Maya city of San Gervasio. Today, San Gervasio in Cozumel stands resurrected as a tribute to the Maya way of life, a lifestyle that cherished fertility, fecundity and reproductive exuberance.

Dropping to the white sand bottom that abuts the coral crested drop-off of a dive site called Palancar Gardens, it struck me that the fertility so coveted in the Maya way of life had spilled over in abundance here along the reefs that cling to Cozumel's southwest side. The convergence of healthy currents delivers an eternally rich supply of nutrients—making these reefs immensely prolific and Ixchel extremely pleased.

COZUMEL

Catching those currents, I was swept along, admiring oversized Stoplight Parrotfish grazing on the coral with their formidable beaks. Pairs of Queen and French Angelfish gnawed away at the edges of bulbous sponges that had grown enormous by filtering plankton from these waters. Every 50 feet or so along the reef, I would spot a flowering giant Caribbean anemone. Their petals and discs beckoned thousands of Blue and Grey Chromis that, when attracted too closely, found themselves anesthetized and oblivious to the fact that these beautiful anemones were about to make a meal of them. And under a ledge, I watched as three pairs of spiky tentacles flailed about, a signpost that large lobsters were in residence. Then, atop the next outcropping, I caught sight of the arch nemesis of these crustaceans, a mammoth Black Grouper, no, three, hugging the coral. I floated closer to find these giant groupers moved about on a cloud of shimmering mercury that turned out to be a coral-cloaking cloud of millions of tiny Silversides.

It was so magical and magnetic that I blindly followed those giant black groupers into the midst of the silver cloud. All about me light danced; spears of morning sunlight penetrated the clear waters above me and reflected wildly off billions of tiny mirror-like scales. I penetrated down into a cave so choked by the Silversides that I no longer had any notion of what direction was up or down. Suddenly, I was startled as the Silverside mass exploded and a huge Black Grouper ripped through their midst. Again, the Silversides massed in front of me and shimmered in the light at the end of the tunnel. As I emerged over the drop-off, I rolled over onto my back and followed a light spear slung from the morning sun, moving downward toward that silver shimmering buttress, and I knew this would be a dive that I would never forget.

I floated closer to find these giant groupers moved about on a cloud of shimmering mercury that turned out to be a coral-cloaking cloud of millions of tiny Silversides.

Flying Into the Realm of the Gods

Cozumel is like that. You drop into the water with the sensation that you are flying as you glide through clear, warm waters, and as soon as you have reveled in these perfect diving conditions, your attention shifts to waves of pulsating life.

At a site called Paso Cedral, I paused to watch as a school of French Grunts, numbering in the hundreds, seemed to vibrate in front of me. A little further along, I eased up a sandy incline toward a patch reef, beside which hung a six-foot Great Barracuda. It had traded in its silvery hue for a mottled camouflaged pattern, which signified that it was at one of the many cleaning stations where tiny neon gobies scurried over its length. On the other side of the ledge, a pair of White-spotted Filefish swam a dizzying circular dance…fish tag. Gliding along on the current, I made my way to the next coral head crowned by a tangle of bright Red and Yellow Finger Sponges. Upon closer inspection, I was taken aback to discover not one, but nine Cherubfish, tiny brilliant blue Pygmy Angelfish (in my career as a diving ichthyologist, I'd seen a *total* of three). Their bright eyes were circled in brilliant yellow rings suspended in a field so brilliantly neon blue that my visual sense was overwhelmed.

A Rising Tide of Silversides

When the conditions are just right along certain Caribbean reefs—ample food, warm water and the correct phase of the moon—these tiny baitfish spawn *en masse*. Then billions of their microscopic larvae swarm to the protective reefs proximal to the event, an event that honors Ixchel and delivers up an amazing experience to any diver fortunate enough to encounter this exuberance of new life on the reef. I have seen it in other Caribbean locales, where these tiny silver fish school in numbers that choke the caves and swallow divers that swim into their midst. But never have I seen it in a profusion to compare with the silver blanket that completely covered Cozumel's reef buttress during that dive to Palancar Gardens.



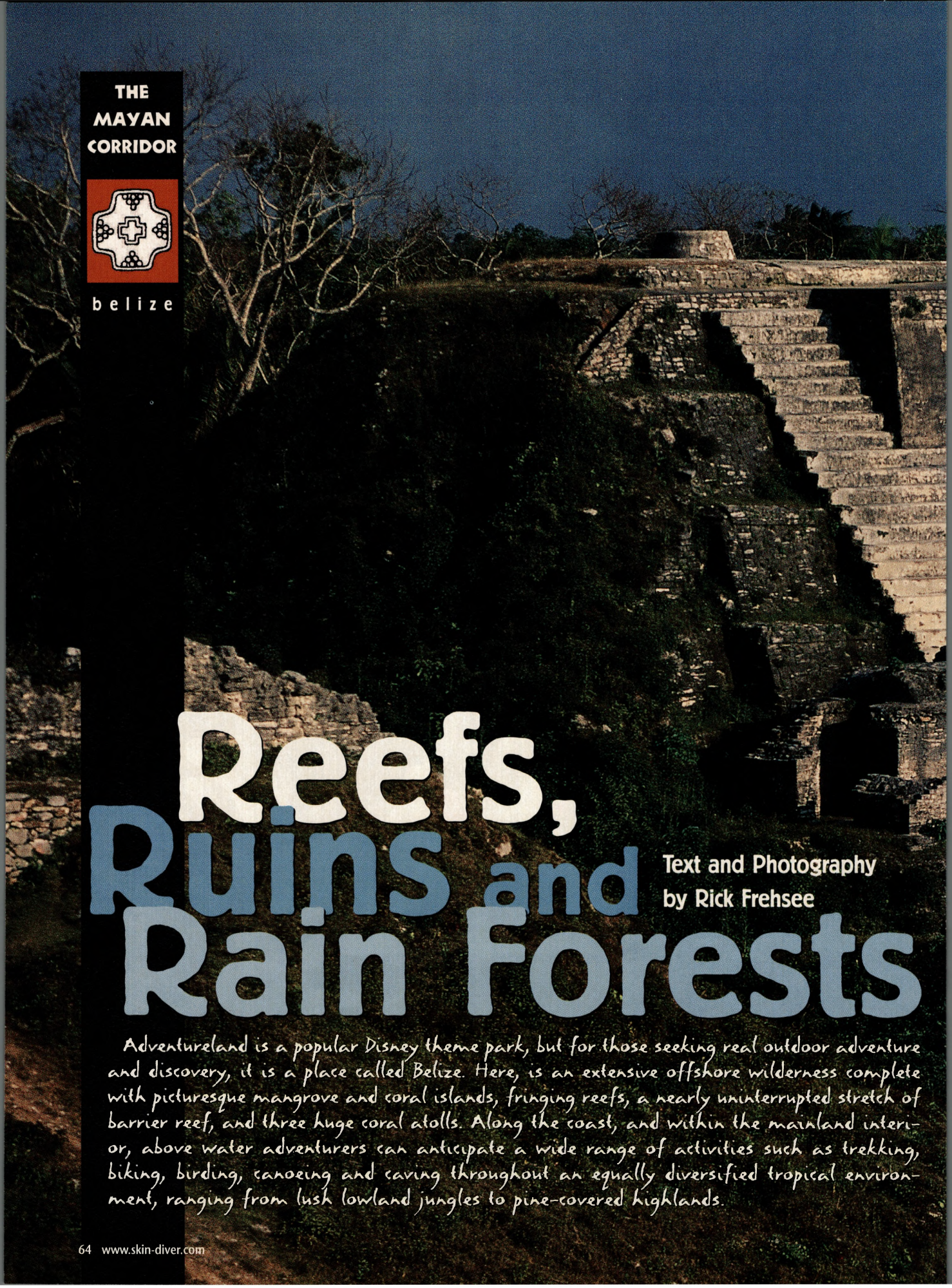
It was an introspective drive as I headed south along the bumpy road that carried me away from San Gervasio and the temples of Ixchel. The day's activities would take place topside as I would soon be flying home. Still, I found myself daydreaming about the incredibly fertile reefs of Cozumel. Gliding along in the current, I had been completely immersed in the force responsible for feeding this prolific ecosystem. If the Maya new of this amazing world, they would have believed the famous Cozumel current was Ixchel's breath of life.

Where Life Thrives

In Cozumel, because the marine park is protected with intense vigilance by divemasters, most of Maya descent, marine creatures live here without fear of being speared. These creatures allow divers to pass close by, often without altering their behaviors. Sand Dollar Sports manager Gustavo Maldonado points out that the reefs are healthier now. "Because now we don't allow fishing in the marine park, and we don't allow divers to touch coral or marine life."



A brilliant anemone, with arms extended to feed in the current. Opposite page: A diver moves through a sea of Silversides.



Reefs, Ruins and Rain Forests

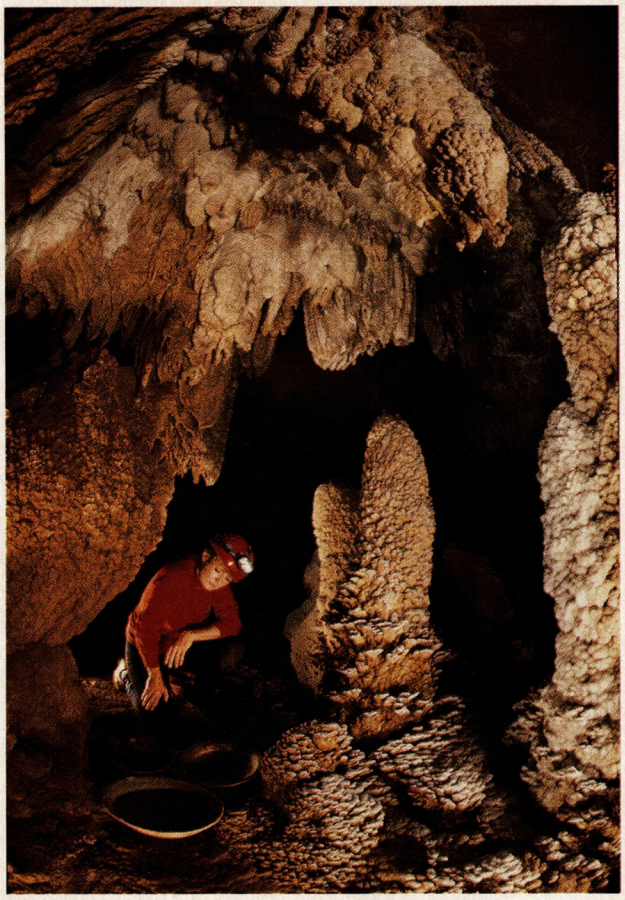
Text and Photography by Rick Frehsee

Adventureland is a popular Disney theme park, but for those seeking real outdoor adventure and discovery, it is a place called Belize. Here, is an extensive offshore wilderness complete with picturesque mangrove and coral islands, fringing reefs, a nearly uninterrupted stretch of barrier reef, and three huge coral atolls. Along the coast, and within the mainland interior, above water adventurers can anticipate a wide range of activities such as trekking, biking, birding, canoeing and caving throughout an equally diversified tropical environment, ranging from lush lowland jungles to pine-covered highlands.



The Maya site of Altun ha is a silent reminder of a civilization that outlasted the Roman empire. Inset: Snorkeling Shark Ray Alley, Ambergis Cay.

Belize is also the gateway to the world of the Maya. Many imposing, enigmatic pyramids and temples dot the jungled landscape; quaint Mopan, Kekchi and Yucatecan villages provide a glimpse into arts, culture and traditions born thousands of years ago. Located at the transition zone between Mexico's flat, bush-covered Yucatan Peninsula and the mountainous, forested isthmus of Central America, Belize is the perfect adventurous vacation experience. All of this is found in a friendly, English-speaking country about the size of Massachusetts, only two hours jet time from the continental U.S.

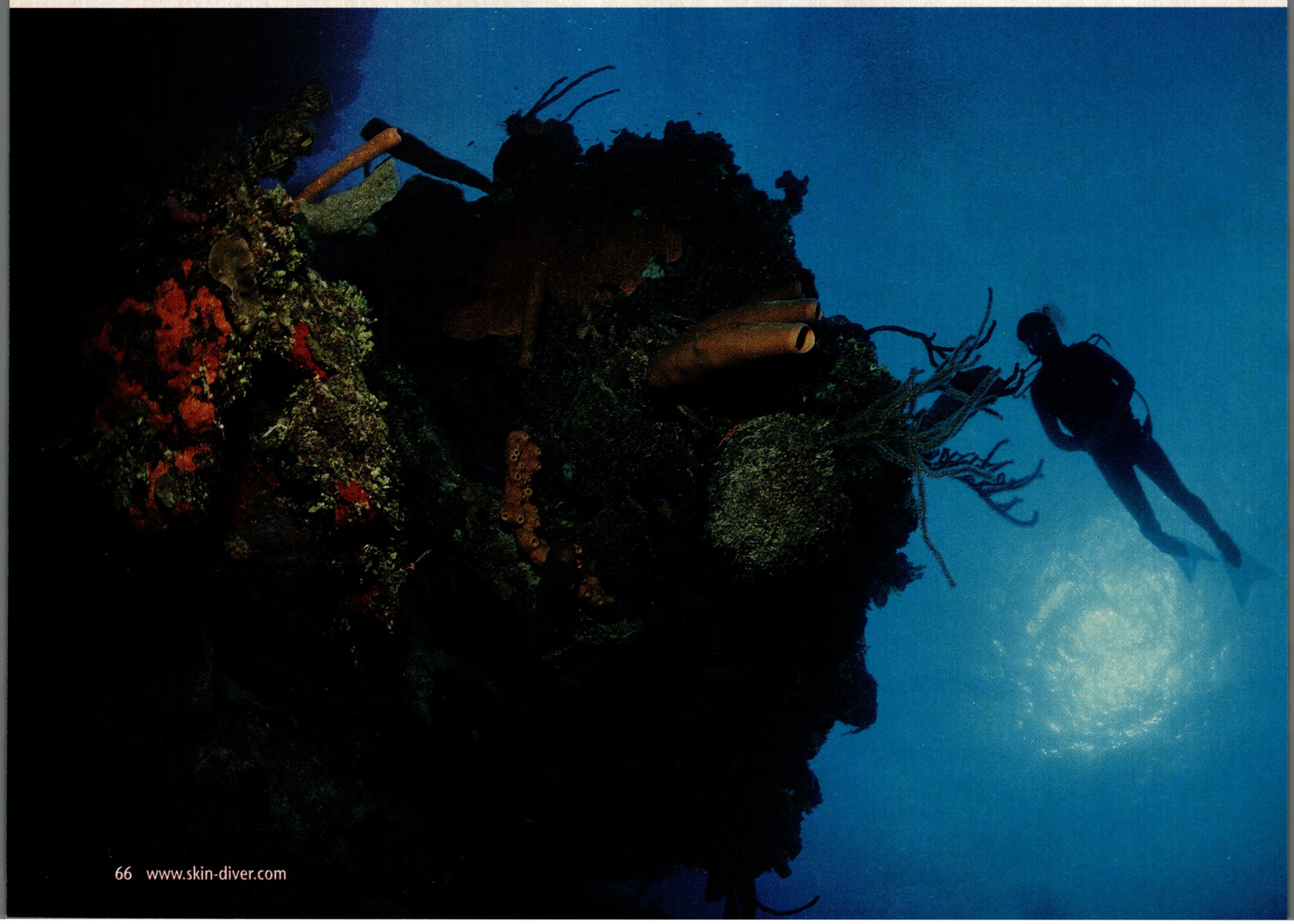


Belize Diving

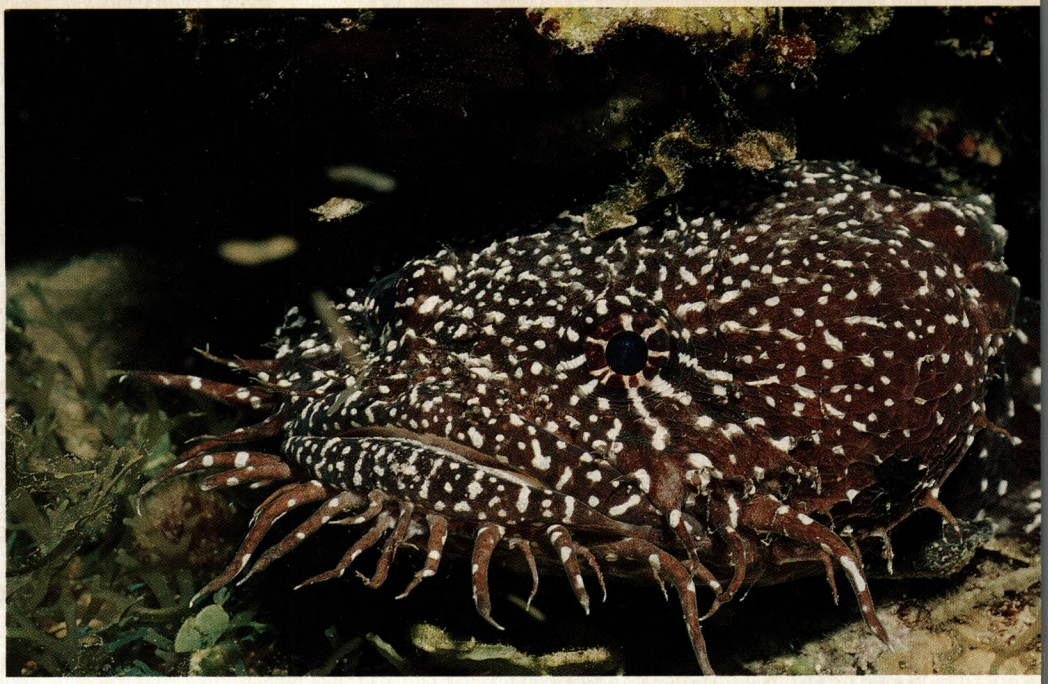
Diversity is the keyword that describes the Belize diving experience; location is what defines each category and style of diving adventure. Off Ambergris Caye, divers explore a maze of underwater caverns along the barrier reef, while snorklers cavort in the shallows with a dozen or more friendly Nurse Sharks. Off Turneffe Islands Atoll, divers encounter schools of fish so dense that they appear as a single pixilated image. Farther offshore, off Lighthouse Reef Atoll, divers descend into the great Blue Hole to examine a field of giant stalactites some 35 feet long. To the south, at Glover's Reef Atoll, divers glide over immense underwater canyons, while snorkelers hover over one of the 700 patch reefs that are found in the crystalline lagoon. Farther south, seaward of the barrier reef, a small group of divers swim with Whale Sharks, and snorkelers glide over acres of Elkhorn Coral encircling scenic Laughingbird Caye. A dozen dives in Belize may well present a dozen different diving experiences—no single description can do it justice.

The list of Belize's below-the-sea attributes is nearly endless, and while thousands of sport divers now visit annually, that number is just a drop in the ocean. The Belize Barrier Reef is 170 miles long and is the most continuous section of the longest barrier reef in this hemisphere, the second longest

Left: Nearly every cave in Belize is an archeological site.
Below: Wall diving at Glover's Reef Atoll.



in the world. Offshore of the barrier reef are three immense coral atolls, three of only four true atolls found in the entire Caribbean. As a result of the continuity of the barrier reef and the adjacent atolls, Belize exhibits perhaps the greatest biodiversity in the Caribbean, from the endemic Lined Toadfish to the mammoth Whale Shark. Because of the extensive area, sparse human population and lengthy mangrove coast, spawning grounds abound. More than 400 species of fish inhabit Belize's waters. Of the 64 species of western Atlantic-Caribbean stony corals, 62 have been identified off Belize. Black Coral is protected by law and can often be found along coral shelves only 45 feet deep.



A Lined Toadfish, proof of Belize's biodiversity.

The Belize offshore world can be divided into northern, central and southern regions. To the north, is Ambergris Caye, the most popular single destination for divers. The little seaside town of San Pedro provides the greatest selection of beach resorts, restaurants, bars, shops and dive operators in the country. The barrier reef parallels the island for more than 25 miles and is only 500 yards offshore. Standout dive sites include Hol Chan Marine reserve, Shark Ray Alley and the *Amigos* shipwreck. Day trips are regularly scheduled to the Great Blue Hole at Lighthouse Reef Atoll, and to the Elbow at Turneffe Islands Atoll. Caye Caulker, a few miles south, presents a similar ambiance with pleasant resorts and cozy guest houses.

The list of Belize below-the-sea attributes is nearly endless, and while thousands of sport divers now visit annually, that number is just a drop in the ocean.

Turneffe Islands Atoll, the largest and closest to shore of the atoll trio, is a cluster of mangrove-crowded islands. The interior is a maze of waterways and islets, forming three separate lagoons. Surrounding the atoll is a necklace of beautiful reefs and dramatic walls. The lagoons function as a juvenile nursery, providing the engine that drives Turneffe's reputation as the marine life capital of Belize.

Lighthouse Reef Atoll is the second largest of the atolls and the one farthest offshore. Some of the most pristine dive sites in all of Belize are to be found in all four quadrants, including the majestic Half Moon Caye Wall. The country's first nature reserve was established on scenic Half Moon Caye, now a popular picnic spot.

Almost directly in the center of Lighthouse Reef is the Great Blue Hole, Belize's signature dive site. The image of this immense ink-blue circular depression has become a recognizable image for the entire country. It is the only site that regularly attracts a crowd of divers; nearly every coastal or offshore resort and live-aboard vessel schedules a weekly dive here. This may not be your favorite dive, but the chances are good that it will be your most unforgettable. A descent into the Great Blue lacks the color and vibrancy of the coral reef; it is more like a visit to the stark landscape of a faraway planet.

Glover's Reef Atoll, the smallest atoll and farthest south, has its own special personality—a few palm-strewn islands and a necklace of reefs surrounding a shallow lagoon. Named after the English pirate John Glover, the history of this atoll includes its stage as a hideout for buccaneers and as a hazard to ships passing just to the outside of its razor-sharp reefs. Wrecks abound, but most have been covered by coral. Divers pay more attention to Glover's sheer walls, steep coral pinnacles, hundreds of patch reefs and prolific marine life.

On the coast of central Belize is Belize City, the main population center and the home of both the International and Municipal Airports. This is the hub to other coastal, interior and offshore destinations. Dive boats and quality live-aboards

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operate from city docks, accessing the barrier reef and select sites at both Turneffe and Lighthouse Reef Atolls. Visitors stationed here can mix and match inland and offshore adventures to the satisfaction of divers and non-divers alike.

Southern Belize is considered the frontier of diving in the country. On the coast are the villages of Dandriga, Hopkins and Sittee. From here, divers have an unmatched accessibility to the best of Belize's two adventurous worlds: Just west of the coast are the rain forests of the Maya Mountains and the entrance to the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary. A 30 to 45 minute boat ride to the east are the many wild reefs and scenic islands along the southern barrier reef. In addition to impressive reefs and walls, offshore southern Belize also harbors the corridor for Whale Shark migrations. Resorts from here to the Placencia now offer specialty Whale Shark tours, especially during the target months of March through May.

The last stop south for diving in Belize is Punta Gorda. Close to the border of both Guatemala and Honduras, "PG," as it is known by locals, is a gateway to excellent wilderness diving, several Maya ruins and the splendor of tropical rain forests.

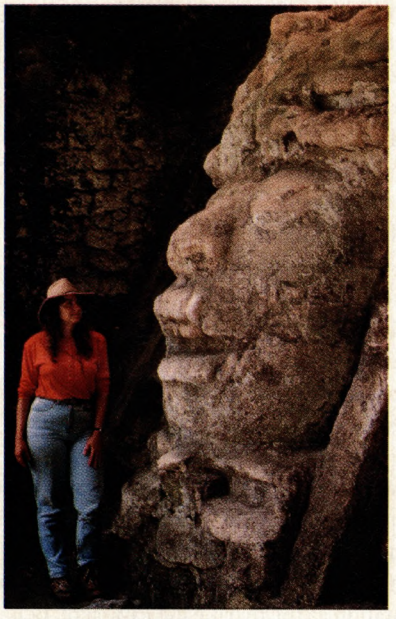


Maya mask maker in Sauantonio Village, southern Belize.

The Belize Maya Connection

For some divers, a leap into the ancient Maya world might seem a stretch, but in this part of the world it is a puddle jump—the natural transition from one adventure to the next. Reefs, ruins and rain forests are all the interwoven parts of the total Belize experience. Nowhere in the world is there better opportunity to easily combine underwater and topside discovery.

Belize is now recognized as the heartland of the ancient Classic Maya World (A.D. 200 to 900), the period of greatest art, hieroglyphic writing and architectural achievement. But, it has not always been so. The earliest explorers traveled through Belize, unaware of a single major site. Successfully hidden by dense, uninhabited forest, monumental sculpture and architecture stood in mute testimony to an indigenous Maya occupation, which once numbered more than a million. It wasn't until the excavations of Altun ha and Xunantunich in the 1960s and 1970s that the true extent of Belize's archaeological heritage began to come to light. Archaeological Belize is a work in progress. More than 15 major sites are now open to the public and these are currently undergoing a continuous program of study and restoration. Climb to the top of a Maya pyramid and survey the panorama of dense, verdant jungle below. Here you begin to sense the magic and mystery of a civilization that reached its apex, while Paris was just a small village—a



The remains of Maya temples invite exploration.

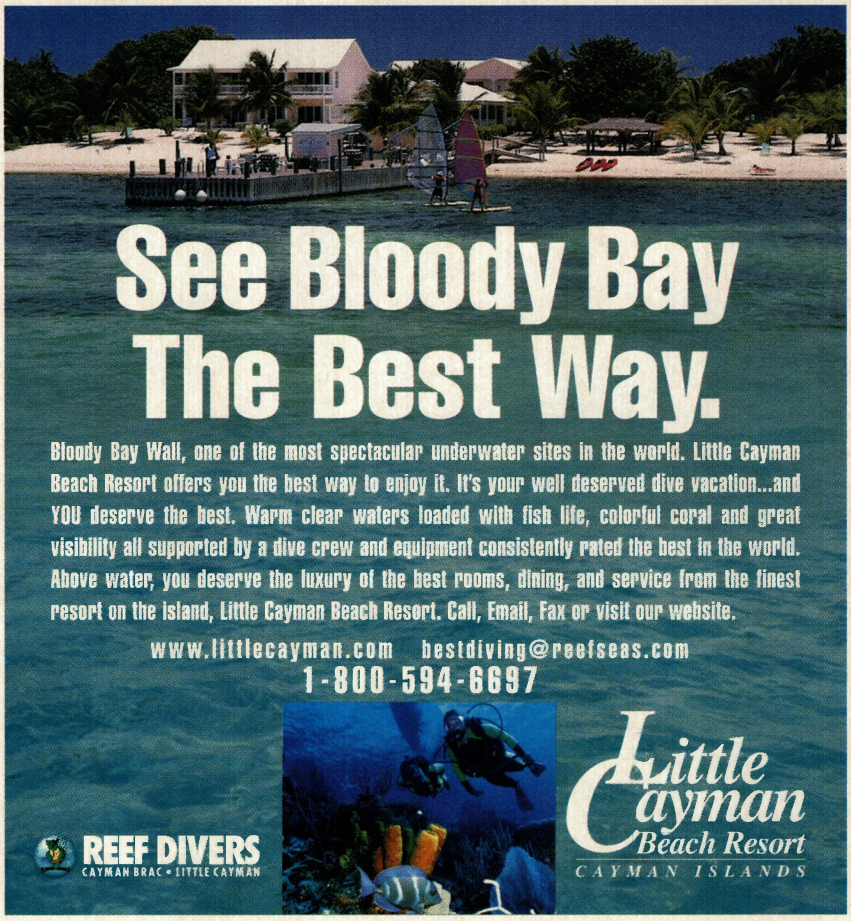
cultural glory that lasted longer than that of the Roman Empire.

The ancient Maya began to build magnificent buildings decorated with intricate sculptures in Belize more than two thousand years ago. They carved stone monuments, inscribing them with sensational stories of war and peace. The hieroglyphic writing system the Maya devised was ingenious—one of only five complete writing systems developed in human history. Appearing like an artistic, coded calligraphy, it took more than 100 years for experts to "crack the Maya code." Today, more than 80 percent of these glyphs have been deciphered. Now, the names of rulers, dates and achievements can be understood from the histories recorded at many Maya sites.

The best site to visit or how many sites to visit depends on your time and interest. Xunantunich, in the Cayo (western) district is one of the most visually impressive. Accessible by hand-cranked car ferry across the scenic Mopan River, getting there is part of the fun. Lamanai is highly recommended for its architecture, jungle ambiance and arrival via boat across beautiful New River Lagoon. Altun ha, the closest major site to Belize City, is a stroll through a nicely landscaped park. Those with real interest will make the effort to visit Caracol, the masterpiece Maya city of Belize. In the south, Lubaantun gets the nod for ambiance and mystical appeal. Nearby are the majestic monuments of Nimli Punit.

For exploring Maya sites you need lightweight cotton clothing and running, walking or hiking shoes. A hat, sunscreen and insect repellent are recommended. Most important is drinking water as some sites are remote and facilities are scarce. The company of a trained guide will make for a more interesting, informative tour. Every site is different; each has its own personality and unique place within the tapestry of the fascinating ancient Maya World.







GETTING AROUND THE MAYAN CORRIDOR



GETTING THERE: Cancun is the gateway to the Riviera Maya. Daily direct flights originate in many U.S. cities, including Houston, Dallas, Newark, Atlanta and Miami. **FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit:** For ocean diving, November through April is cooler and drier. May through August are the calmest months. September and October can be wet and windy, but are great bargain months because tourism is low. The cenotes offer excellent diving year-round. **Topside Climate:** 80°F. **Water Temperature:** 74°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 9.14 (PESO). USD is easily accepted. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time minus 1 hour. **RESORTS & DIVE OPERATORS:** *Akumal (Vista del Mar Hotel)* (800) 925-6325 (#15) or (011) 52-984-875-9058 www.mexico-vacation.com • *Akumal Dive Adventures* U.S. toll free (877) 425-8625 www.akumaldiveadventures.com • *Aktun Dive Center* (011) 52-984-871-2311 www.aktundive.com • *Cyan Ha Dive Shop* (011) 52-984-873-0978 www.cyanha.com • *Explorean* (877) EXPLORA e-mail:contact@explorean.com • *Hidden Worlds Jungle Adventures* (011) 52-984-877-8535 www.hiddenworlds.com • *Island Dreams Travel* (800) 346-6116 www.islandream.com • *Maya Ha Resort & Coatitours* (887) 443-1600 www.mayaharesort.com • *Playa del Carmen (Hotel Las Palapas)* (800) 433-0885 or (011) 52-984-873-0584 www.laspalapas.com.mx • *Puerto Morelos (Hotel Ojo de Agua)* 52-998-871-0027 www.ojo-de-agua.com **RESOURCES:** *Loco Gringo Underground* www.locogringo.com (best for the entire area; covering offbeat hotels, B&Bs, dive operators; lots of information packed into an easy-to-navigate site) • *Lonely Planet Books* www.lonelyplanet.com • *Skin Diver Online* www.skin-diver.online



riviera maya

GETTING THERE: Serviced daily by Continental (www.continentalairlines.com), American (www.aa.com) and TACA (www.taca.com), among others, from most major hubs including Dallas, Miami and Los Angeles. **FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit:** Year-round tropical destination. **Topside Climate:** Average temperature 86°F. **Water Temperature:** 79 to 82°F (January through April); 84 to 85°F (June through October). **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 1.97 BZD (Belize Dollar) **Time Difference:** EST minus 1 hour (Central Standard Time year-round). **LIVE-ABOARDS:** *Aggressor Fleet* (800) 348-2628 www.aggressor.com • *Peter Hughes Diving* (800) 932-6237 www.peterhughes.com **RESORTS & DIVE OPERATORS:** *Amigos Del Mar* (800) 345-9786 e-mail: amigosdive@btl.net • *Aqua Dives Belize* (800) 641-2994 www.aquadives.com • *Blackbird Caye Resort* (888) 271-3483 www.blackbirdresort.com • *Gaz Cooper's Belize Dive Center* (800) 499-3002 www.divebelize.com • *Hugh Parkeys' Belize Dive Connection* (888) 223-5403 www.belizediving.com • *Larry Parker's Reef Divers* (800) 460-5665 www.reefdivers.com • *Ramon's Village* (800) 624-4215 www.ramons.com • *Royal Mayan Resort and Spa Cayo* (888) 271-3483 www.royalmayan.com • *Sea Sports Belize* (011) 501-235505 www.seasportsbelize.com • *Tobacco Caye Diving* (011) 501-14-9907 www.tobaccocayediving.com • *Turneffe Island Lodge* (800) 874-0118 www.turneffelodge.com • *Turneffe Flats* (800) 815-1304 www.tflats.com • *Tropica Beach Resort* (888) 778-9776 www.tropicabelize.com • *Sunbreeze Hotel* (800) 688-0191 www.sunbreeze.net **RESOURCES:** *Belize Tourism Board* (800) 624-0686 www.travelbelize.org/marine • *Lonely Planet Books* www.lonelyplanet.com • *Skin Diver Online* www.skin-diver.com



belize

GETTING THERE: AeroMexico (www.aeromexico.com) flies directly to Cozumel from Atlanta, a major hub for a number of U.S. airlines. With its bilingual aircrews and hospitality, AeroMexico is well worth traveling. **FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit:** Most American divers visit Cozumel during the dry season—late October through early May. Peak tourist season is December to April, but Cozumel is a four-season destination, and stellar diving can be enjoyed year-round. **Topside Climate:** Averages 80°F. **Water Temperature:** Winter approximately 80°F, with summer 83°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 9.14 (PESO). While American dollars are widely accepted, it is best to use a credit card if the merchant will accept one, as this will fetch the best exchange rate. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time minus 1 hour. Cozumel and Cancún observe Daylight-saving time, from May to September. **DIVE OPERATORS:** *Aqua Safaris* (831) 479-4386 www.aquasafaris.com • *Aqua World* www.aquaworld.com • *Aquatics Sports Dive Shop* www.scubacozumel.com • *Blue Bubble Divers* (800) 878-8853 www.bluebubble.com • *Blue Note* www.bluenotescuba.com • *Caribbean Divers* www.cozumeldiving.net/caribbean_divers/ • *Cozumel Equalizers* (800) 925-9939 www.equalizer.net. • *Cozumel Sports* www.cozumelsports.com • *Del Mar Aquatics* (800) 435-3240 www.divecozumel.com • *Dive House Cozumel* www.divehouse.com • *Dive Palancar* (800) 433-0885 www.dsi-divetours.com/dpal.htm.com • *Dive Paradise* (800) 308-5125 www.diveparadise.com • *Sand Dollar Sports* (888) 737-6399 www.sanddollarsports.com • *Scuba Club Cozumel* (800) 847-5708 www.scubaclubcozumel.com • *Scuba-Du* (800) 372-0200 www.cozumel.net/scubadu • *Yellow Rose Divers* (888) 366-8708 www.yellowrosedivers.com • *Yucatech Expeditions* (011) 52-987-2-56-59 512-847-5737 e-mail: yucatech@prodigy.net.mx **RESORTS:** *Allegro Resorts* (800) 858-2258 www.allegroresort.com • *Casa Del Mar* (800) 435-2340 www.cozumel-hotels.net/casa_del_mar • *Costa Club Cozumel Resort Hotel* (800) 53-SUITE www.costaclubcozumel.com • *Fiesta Americana* (877) FIESTA-8 www.fiestaamericana.com • *Flamingo Dive Resort* (800) 806-1601 www.hotelflamingo.com • *Plaza Las Glorias* (888) 599-DIVE **RESOURCES:** *Cozumel Tourism* (011) 52-987-2-0972 • *Lonely Planet Books* www.lonelyplanet.com • *Skin Diver Online* www.skin-diver.com



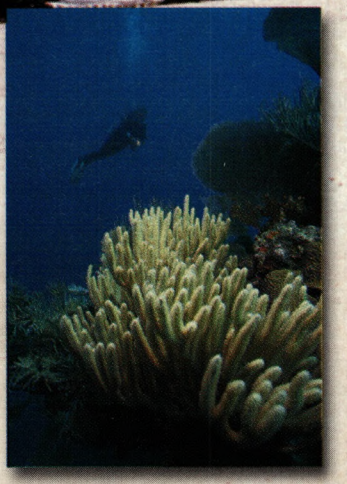
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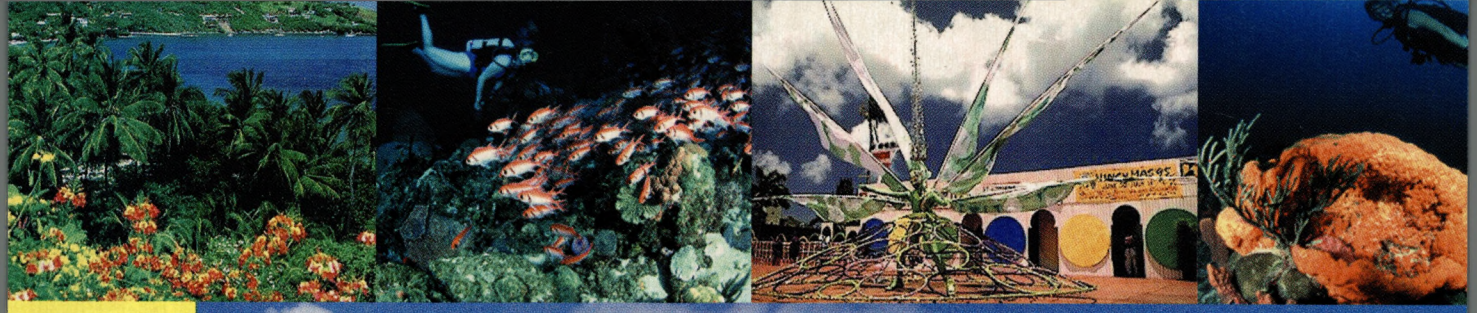


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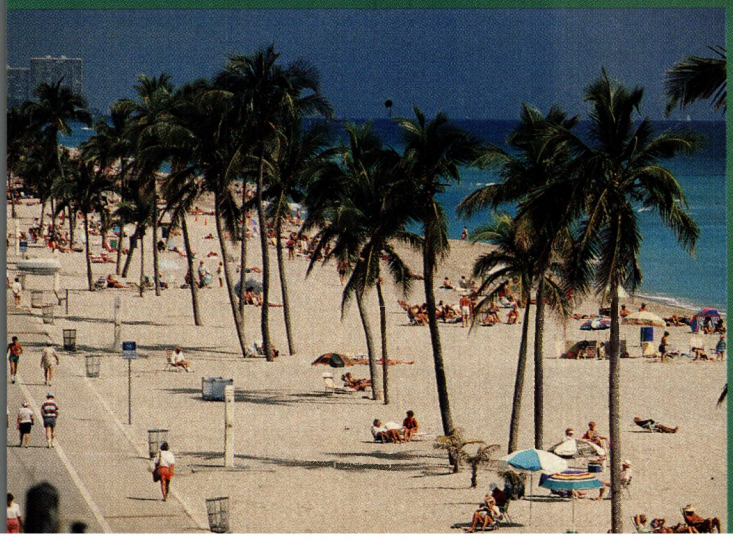
Florida's FISH HOTELS

The Wrecks and Reefs of Ft. Lauderdale

Text and Photography by Ellsworth Boyd



Castro Perez explores the remains of the *Noula Express*. Below: Ft. Lauderdale's famous beach.



You might remember that Mohammed commanded the mountain to come to him and, when nothing happened, he shrugged his shoulders and declared that he would go to the mountain.

Divers visiting Ft. Lauderdale have a great advantage over Mohammed—at least where the ocean is concerned. Here, the ocean comes to them! It comes with a chain of incomparable wrecks and reefs that stretch for 23 miles from Port Everglades Inlet in the south to Hillsboro Inlet in the north.

Three distinct coral reefs, ranging in depths from 10 to 110 feet, run parallel to the beach. Interspersed among the reefs and sandy plateaus, divers find an array of buoyed shipwrecks ranging from tugs to tankers, freighters, schooners and barges. Most of them were put down over the past 20 years by dive clubs, county agencies and fishermen. Not only did this take pressure off the delicate colonies of coral, it created more fisheries as well.

Madame, We Have Visitors

The *Mercedes*, a 198-foot Venezuelan freighter sunk in 60 to 90 feet of water off shore of Sunrise Boulevard, took a hit from Andrew that broke it in two. The ship's history and location near the Gulf Stream—where she draws a parade of pelagics—are her significant attributes. Grounded in a squall on the shores of plush Palm Beach in 1984, the ship's bow ended up in socialite Mollie Wilmot's

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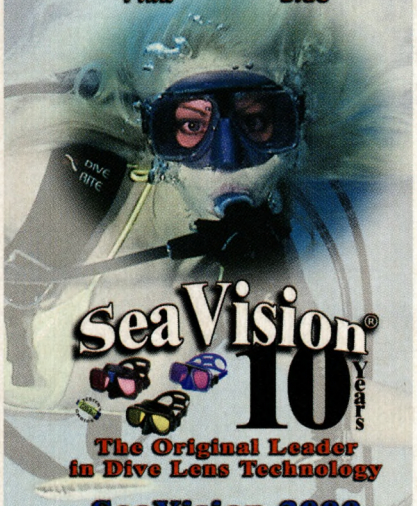
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Florida's



swimming pool. "Little men"—Venezuelans who were abandoning ship—scampered across the yard, prompting the maid to announce, "Madame, we have visitors." Neither Mollie nor Rose Kennedy, her next door neighbor, were enthralled over the mishap, especially when it took four months for city officials to remove the eyesore. Abandoned by its owners, the vessel was towed to Ft. Lauderdale, where the doors, portholes and hatches were removed. In the spring of 1985, the *Mercedes* became one of Ft Lauderdale's first and most popular artificial reefs.

Gettin' Wrecked With Captain Tony

Six of us joined Capt. Tony Coulter on his 30-foot Island Hopper, *Diversity*, through Deerfield's inland waterway and out Boca Raton Inlet for a double wreck dive off Deerfield Beach. The *Noula Express*, a Danish freighter sunk in 1987 in 50 to 80 feet of water, offers penetration to its cargo hold, where schools of grunts, damselfish and Bar Jacks rush for cover. A 4-foot-long barracuda cruised the wreck and joined us on a brief safety stop. After a surface interval, we prepared to visit the *Sea Empress*.

Almost within spitting distance of the *Noula*, the homely barge didn't look very inviting at first glance. But on close inspection, she suddenly came alive with friendly sea creatures. A

FISH HOTELS

The [Mercedes'] history and location near the Gulf Stream—where she draws a parade of pelagics—are her significant attributes.

100-pound Goliath Grouper hovered above the hold, then disappeared into its recesses. Two Southern Stingrays followed so close that divers reached out and stroked them as they cruised by. Most amazing was the 6-foot Green Moray with a body as thick as a grown man's thigh. Not content to remain in its hole, the eel slithered through the conduits where damsels, hamlets, wrasses and chromis sought refuge.

DeMartini's Favorites

Walt DeMartini, captain of the 48-foot Louisiana crew boat, *Dry Martini*, embarked from Dania, south of Ft. Lauderdale, then passed through Port Everglades Cut and into the ocean. A 50-minute jaunt south took us about a mile off Hollywood Beach, where the *Donal McAllister* lies in 75 feet of water. A former New York Harbor boat sunk three years ago as an artificial reef, it affords an easy penetration into the pilothouse and cargo hold. Juvenile anemones, sponges and soft corals thrive on the railings and decks of the 110-foot-long wreck. Conies, Fairy Basslets and Blackbar Soldierfish hide in its nooks and crannies, while Yellowtail Snappers and Horse-eye Jacks cruise its perimeter. Popular with divers and fishermen, the *McAllister* is just one of more than a dozen of DeMartini's favorite wrecks. Another is the three-sectioned Tenneco Towers, oil drilling platforms donated by the Tenneco Oil Company to create

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Florida's FISH HOTELS

an artificial reef off Hallandale.

The *Copenhagen*, sunk off Pompano Beach, is one of 15 shipwreck preserves—established by the Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research—that stretch from the state's panhandle to the Keys. In May 1900, the British steamship ran into the reef where it


Schools of grunts look for cheap lodgings on the Tenneco Towers.

became hopelessly lodged. After her cargo of coal was unloaded, the *Copenhagen* was left to the elements and eventually sank in 20 to 30 feet of water. Scattered in the sand next to a ledge, her remains attract a variety of fish and coral that are protected in the preserve.

The *Jim Atria*, *Guy Harvey*, *Ancient Mariner*, *Jay Scutti*, *Rebel* and *Monomy* are a few of the many other wrecks that earmark Ft. Lauderdale as a diving hot spot. And, regardless of whether a dive site is natural or artificial, they all help make up an incredible marine habitat literally at the back door of Florida's southeast coast—where the ocean comes to divers in waves of wrecks and reefs.

For a free copy of Vacation Planner Guide and a video or CD-ROM about diving, contact the Greater Ft. Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1850 Eller Drive, Suite 303, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316 or call toll-free (800) 22-SUNNY. Access the website at www.sunny.org.

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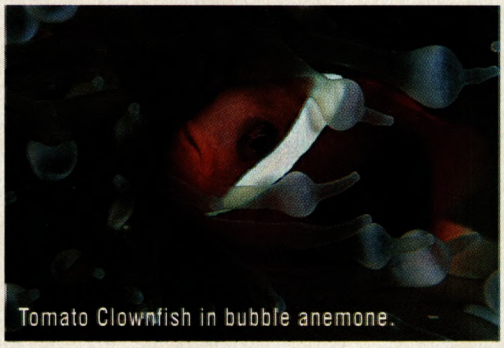
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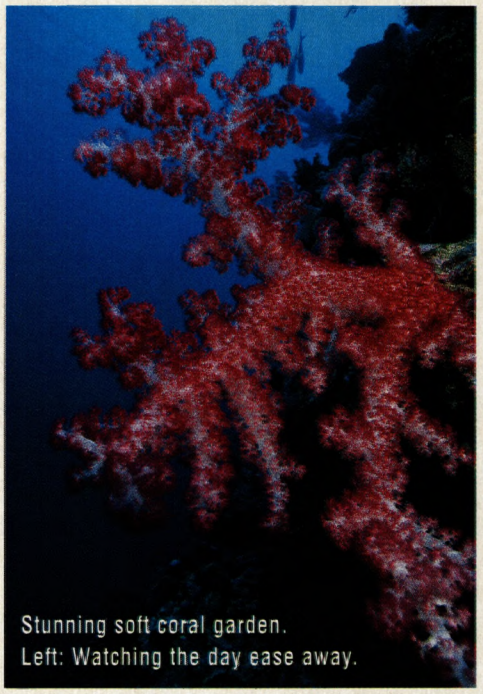


A major site of World War II action from Operation Desecrate 1, Palau's waters are chock-full of planes and shipwrecks.



Tomato Clownfish in bubble anemone.





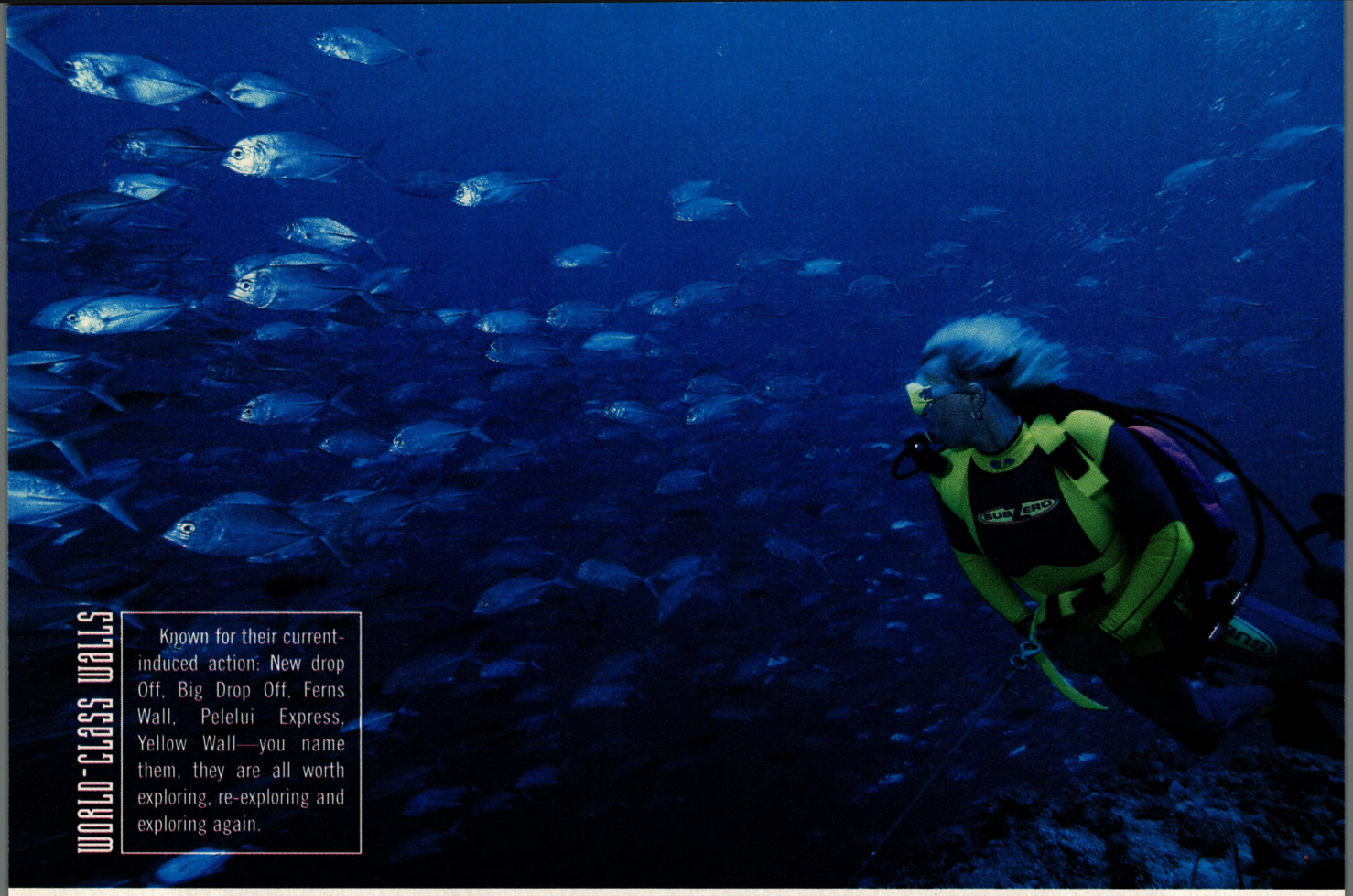
Stunning soft coral garden.
Left: Watching the day ease away.

PERFECT EVERY TIME

Palau

BY ASTRID WITTE & CASEY MAHANEY

Hooked into the ledge at Blue Corner, I was holding onto my mask, braving the strong current from the depths below. As cooler, nutrient-rich water pushed up the wall, it triggered the food chain. Sharks galore—literally dozens—paraded by, some close enough to touch. A dense cloud of silvery jacks glided near the ledge, barracuda swirled above us, and enormous schools of Pyramid Butterflyfish and fusiliers filled the few remaining gaps. This was Blue Corner at its best. And, although I had seen it countless times before, I was still amazed. In Palau, even the surprises you expect are pure diving bliss.



WORLD-CLASS WALLS

Known for their current-induced action: New drop Off, Big Drop Off, Ferns Wall, Pelelui Express, Yellow Wall—you name them, they are all worth exploring, re-exploring and exploring again.



The ineffable world of Jellyfish Lake.

Rising some 27,000 feet from the Western Pacific Ocean floor, the southernmost peaks of a vast mountain range comprise what many consider *the* underwater wonder of the world: The magnificent island nation of Palau, encompassing some 340 islands stretching across 400 miles of ocean. Luxuriously painted in all possible shades of ocean blues and tropical greens above the surface and a full spectrum of rainbow hues below, Palau's beauty and diversity draw divers from around the globe. Having traveled to Palau many times before, we were anxious to indulge in five weeks of mind-melting diving and to explore the islands' unique ecosystems. In short order, Ethan, a marine biologist from Sam's Tours, would more intimately acquaint us with Palau's marine environments, from complex mangrove forests, seagrass beds and cave systems to stunning drop-offs and inner lagoon muck dives.

[JELLY FISH LAKE] IS A SPECTACLE OF NATURE YOU MUST EXPERIENCE TO FULLY COMPREHEND.

SPECTACULAR DROP-OFFS

Corner dives, of which our brief descent onto Blue Corner was spectacularly typical, are known for big animals and fast action. Next to us, several other divers watched the swirl of sharks, jacks and barracuda with saucer-sized eyes. And yet, as we dived Blue Corner over and over again, current or not, we quickly realized that this world-class site has much more to offer than just monster fish action. The walls leading to the corner are festooned with multi-hued soft corals with Oriental Sweetlips, Emperor Angelfish and Masked Bannerfish cruising amongst them. The shallow plateau adjacent to Blue Corner's Drop Off, an area we were unable to explore when the current was ripping, is home to a resident Eagle Ray as well as octopi, Hawksbill Turtles and Whitetip Reef Sharks. Numerous cleaning stations attract Spotted Sweetlips, squirrelfish and giant morays with their service. We also found mantis shrimp and an array of shrimp gobies. When the current is slack, or in a sense, when it's running the wrong way for ultimate shark action, is the best opportunity to fully explore Palau's world-famous corner dives.

MYSTERIOUS CAVES

Just to the northwest of Ulong Island, we entered the dimly lit Siaes Tunnel through a gaping hole in the reef that reaches from 90 feet all the



Skin Diver GUIDE PALAU



GETTING THERE: Continental Airlines Vacations offers service to Palau. Call (888) 736-9796. **FACTS & TIPS: Best Time to Visit:** Year-round, but the rainy season is June through August. **Topside Climate:** Tropical, daytime temperatures in the 80s°F; nights in the 70s°F. **Water Temperature:** Mid-80s°F. **Exchange Rate:** U.S. currency is accepted. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time plus 14 hours.

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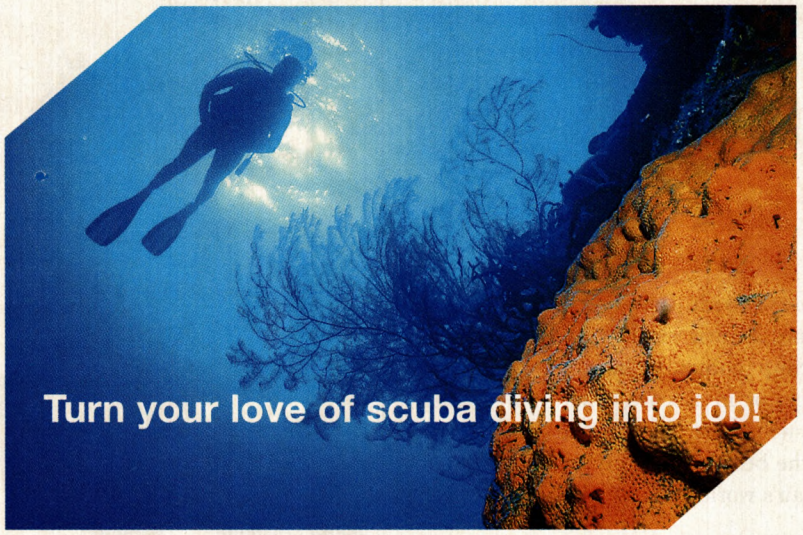
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L to R: A black seahorse discovered in the seagrass; bannerfish, one of the myriad creatures at Blue Corner; paddling peacefully through the Rock Islands; a magnificent Spotted Eagle Ray.



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way down to the cavern's bottom at 140 feet. Majestic Black Coral trees dangle from the immense, sponge encrusted ceiling. The interior walls are home to cowrie shells, gobies, hawkfish and nudibranchs, while the gently upward sloping seafloor is littered with resting Whitetip Reef Sharks. Stirring lazily as we approached, the sharks finally exited through two massive holes, which were lavishly embellished with red and golden gorgonians, exquisitely backlit by the outside light.

Palauan reefs are punctuated with caves and caverns of all sizes. We visited another huge cavern created by eons of strong currents and crashing waves. It's accessed via four blue holes, vertical shafts in the partially collapsed ceiling. Falling into the indigo chamber below, we found ourselves amongst flickering rays of sunlight. Carefully settling on the cavern's bottom, we tried to absorb the visual grandeur of this submarine chamber, before starting to explore its many nooks and crannies. Deeper inside the cavern is a fascinating extension that leads into complete darkness. Known as the Tunnel of Doom, the skeletons of many sea turtles rest here, a constant reminder of the potential danger of this place.

Fascinating Lakes

Palau boasts more than 70 marine lakes, some still connected to the ocean, while others, such as Jellyfish Lake, are completely landlocked. Over millions of years, two species of jellyfish, the moon jellies and the *Mastigias* jellies, have developed here as unique species that exist nowhere else on Earth.

While Jellyfish Lake is often cited in stories of Palau, no picture or any





amount of words could ever describe the sensation of swimming amongst millions of stingless jellyfish, silently pulsating around you. It's a spectacle of nature you must experience to fully comprehend. We discovered dense walls of millions of little jelly babies hovering in the shallows, some barely a quarter of an inch in size. Although the jellyfish are considered the main attraction, they are not the only unique inhabitants of the lake. There is a species of goby endemic to the lake and a jellyfish-feeding anemone that resembles a beautiful, white flower.

Less well-known, but equally unique, is Mandarinfish Lake, actually a shallow bay that is almost entirely rimmed by the Rock Islands, yet there is a narrow passage still connecting it to the ocean. While we found an interesting array of unusual species thriving in this shallow, protected body of water, there is an incredible abundance of the namesake Mandarin Fish. They are best observed at dawn or dusk when they become very active, often in elaborate courting and mating rituals.

Fascinating Wrecks

More than 50 ships of the Japanese Imperial Navy were destroyed in Palau in March of 1944, during American air strike Operation Desecrate. Most of the wrecks lie in shallow, protected water and are easily reached from Koror. Perhaps the most interesting is the *Iro*, a 470-foot tanker that rests in a perfectly upright position in 120 feet of water. Heavily encrusted with soft corals, fluted oysters and brightly hued sponges, the *Iro* boasts huge guns on the stern and the bow. While

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the interior has been salvaged and instruments and other artifacts are missing, the wreck now acts as an artificial reef, boasting a wealth of inner lagoon marine species. Curious batfish and the unusual Eight-banded and Dusky Butterflyfish roam the wreck, while many species of shrimp and crab inhabit the hull. Two Giant Clams live on top of one of the ship's masts, while the kingposts are home to numerous anemones and Tomato Clownfish.



Courting Mandarinfish.

During our five-week stay, we had the opportunity to dive a great number of Palau's top sites, but like faithful pilgrims, our favorite dives came when returning to sites we had already dived. There was an enormous degree of satisfaction in revisiting our favorite critters, coming back for another shot at a perfect wide-angle set-up or, more often than not, finding the same site surprisingly different with changing currents, new weather conditions or simply during another time of the day. It all boils down to one simple fact—Palau delivers. Every time.

Special thanks to the Palau Pacific Resort and Sam's Tours for their generous assistance.

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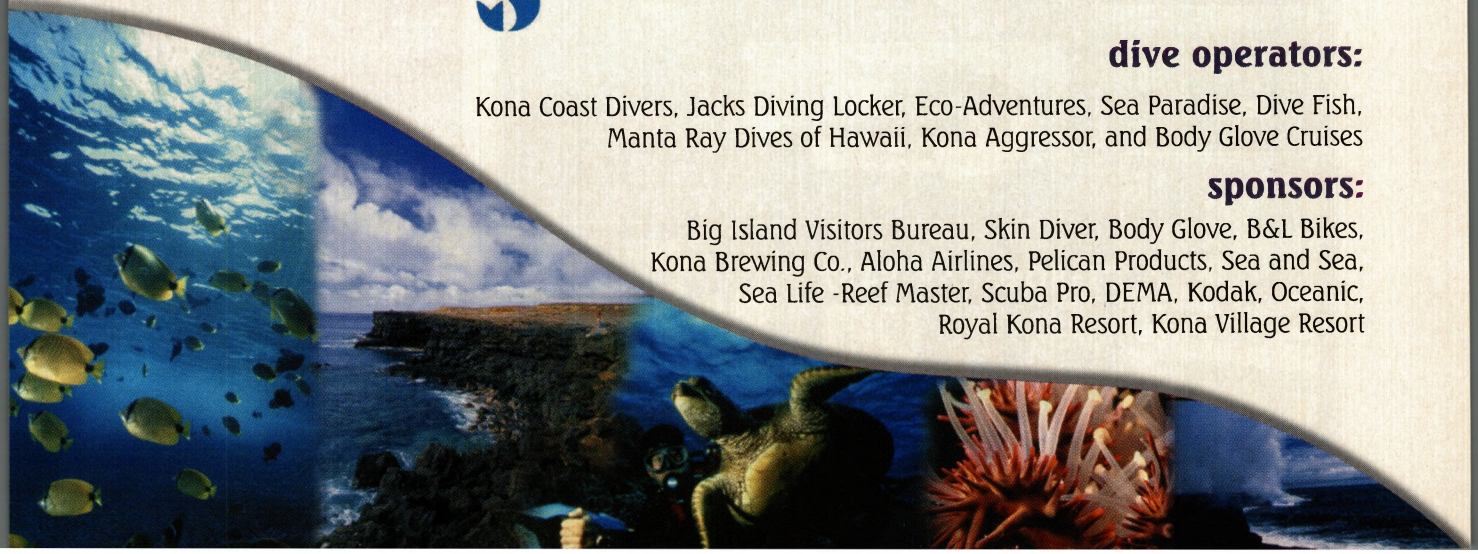
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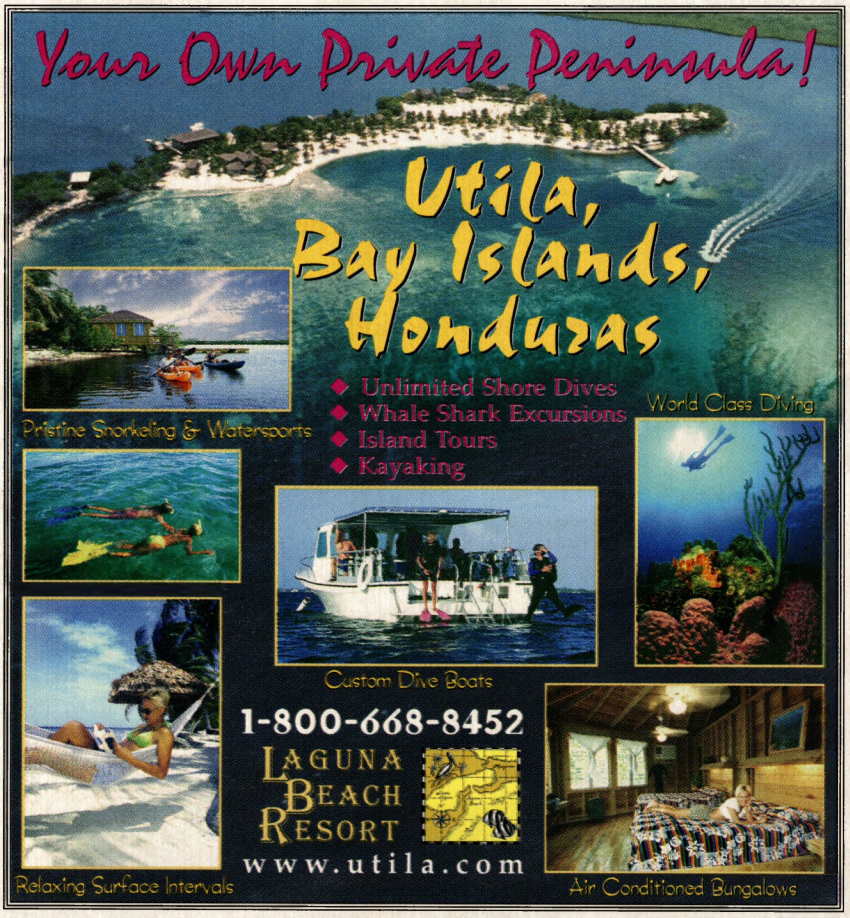
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BUSTING "THE GRAND"

(continued from page 23)

Decompression stops, planned with the help of Abyss gas-planning software, began with a 20-second stop at 656 feet. His ascent speed from depth was 82 feet per minute to his first and second stops, 49 feet per minute to the rest of his stops below 493 feet, and 33 feet per minute for all stops above that.

Bennett reported two anxious moments during ascent.

"At the 493-foot gas switch, the valve on the tank played up," he said. "I was losing gas, so I needed to turn the valve on and off manually until I reached a spare tank, which had been placed at 427 feet. I had practiced this skill, so it was not as bad as it seems. A good point here is that the bottle was only there because my team had insisted. I had said the team was not to go below 300 feet, but Jorge Marques [the Portuguese record holder], a good friend who was on the team, stressed that, in the absence of safety divers, it had to be there.

"Problem two happened in around 200 feet," Bennett said. "All was going well, then I suddenly experienced extreme rotational vertigo and vomiting, also tinnitus in the right ear. This lasted a large part of the remaining dive time—it came in bouts. At first, both the team and I were unsure what the problem was. As you can imagine, it was a very taxing time, both physically and mentally. We extended the decompression run-time in case it was DCS. But after about an hour, both Joe Mclary [team paramedic] and I were sure it was not."

Total ascent time was 9 hours and 36 minutes, including 1.5 hours added because of vertigo and tinnitus.

In terms of pure depth, Bennett's next project—a dive to ascertain if a 688-foot-deep wreck is that of the World War II *Yamashiro*—might sound tame in comparison. But he says that he has no plans to go back and try to best his own record.

"Yes," he says. "I am sure that I can. But to go further would mean little. I feel the only deeper dive worth doing at the moment is Zacaton. But that is firmly in Jim Bowden's and his team's hands." —Tom Morrisey



Aqua Cat at anchor in the Exuma Cays
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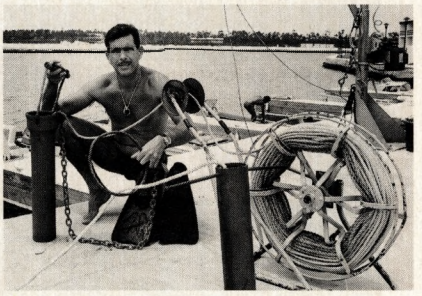
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FREEFLOW

"Dolphin Man" Jacques Mayol Dies

THE FRENCH BREATH-HOLD diving legend, Jacques Mayol was found dead on Sunday, December 7, 2001, in his villa on the Italian island of Elba. Police in the town of Capoliveri said a neighbor discovered the 74-year-old man's body after Mayol had failed to answer his telephone. Although police refused to share further details, it was determined that Mayol died on Saturday and that he had committed suicide.

Italian diver Umberto Pelizzari, a friend of Mayol's, told the Rome AP



Legendary diver Jacques Mayol.

that he had seen Mayol in November at his Elba villa and that Mayol "seemed to be down."

"The Dolphin Man," as Mayol came to be known, was the first freediver to plunge below 330 feet, which he did in 1976. Seven years later, Mayol set another freediving depth record of 345 feet; he was 56 years old.

"It was with great sadness that we learned of the death in Elba of Jacques Mayol," reads a letter posted on Jacques Mayol's official website, written by Mayol's publishers, editor in chief and owner of Idelson-Gnochhi Publisher Ltd. "The man who successfully imitated dolphins, his myths will live forever in the history of man's achievements to the ocean. The ending of a great diving life, seemingly was in tragic circumstances."

The inspiration for Luc Besson's film, *The Big Blue*, Mayol authored the book *Dolphinus*, or "The Dolphin Within Man." The book explored the natural relationship between man, ocean and dolphin, and today, is considered a freediver's bible.

Mayol, born of French parents in China, had spent the latter part of his life in Italy. Funeral arrangements had not been made at press time.

PHOTO: SDM ARCHIVES. OPPOSITE PAGE: COURTESY AGGRESSOR



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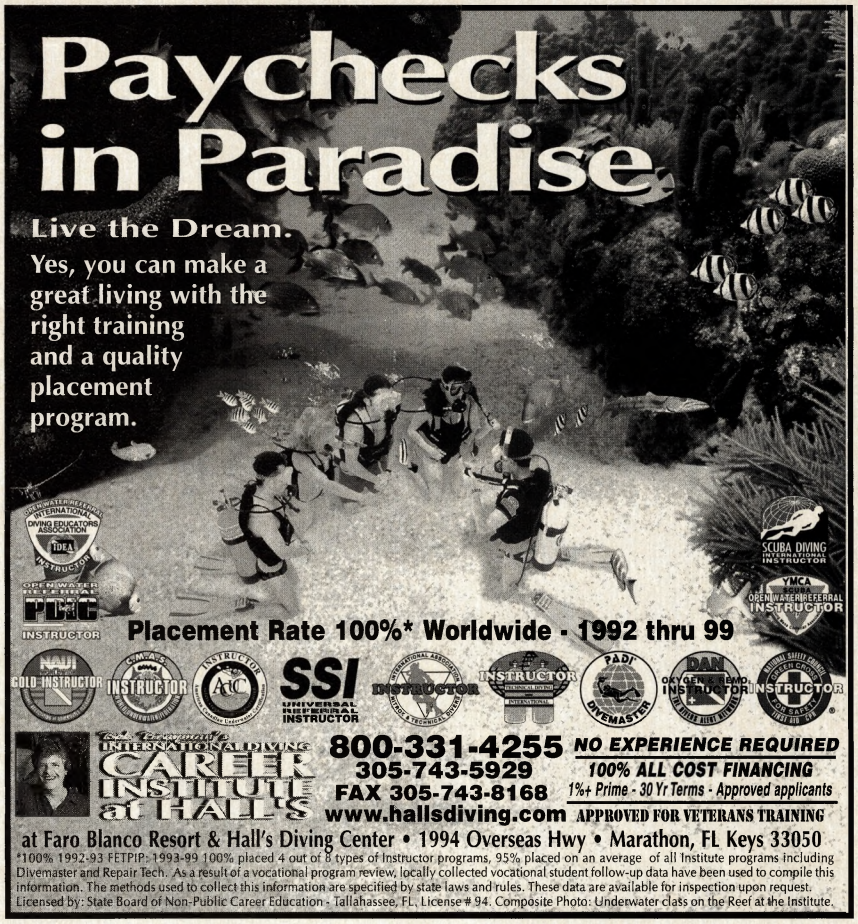
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The coverage territory is worldwide, and products that will be covered include dive equipment, cameras, housings, lenses, strobes and diving accessories. Of course, coverage is subject to policy terms and conditions.

Added Chris Bennett, President of DAN Services, Inc., "We're pleased to add a service that many DAN members have requested. Divers can now use DAN for all their dive insurance needs."

To purchase the plan, go to www.diversalertnetwork.org/danservices/equipment.asp.





TOP TEN DIVE SITES IN THE TURKS & CAICOS

Hopscotch your way down the Bahamas chain and you'll end up planting a foot firmly in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Home to gut-wrenching wall dives and a favorite retreat for whale-watching junkies, TCI also offer up some spectacular reefs. We asked former resident dive pros MATT AND ANGELA WEEDON *for a top 10 list of the islands' best dives. They replied, "What, just 10?" Drumroll please...*



Spotted Eagle Ray

#10: GRACE BAY'S AQUARIUM

Every seasoned dive guide in Provo tells a story about something incredible they've encountered in Grace Bay. From Humpback Whales to Mantas, the chance to see "Mr. Big" keeps the divers coming back.

However, Grace Bay's Aquarium is special because it's the only "non-wall" diving in this wall-diving capitol of the Caribbean. French and Bluestriped Grunts sway back and forth between the spurs of hard corals running down the slope, while schools of jacks parade overhead. And, nearly every coral head has a resident bug.

#9: KELLY'S FOLLIES

Similar in underwater topography to Grand Turk, Salt Cay is a tiny island on the southeastern edge of the TCI. Its walls start in only 30 feet of water and are saturated with healthy coral growth. At Kelly's Follies, large schools of grunts and schoolmasters, a literal moving wall of yellow, hang under the dive boats, and Nurse Sharks can be caught napping beneath the reef's ledges.

#8: AMPHITHEATER

Amphitheater, off the Northwest Point of Provo, has walls that plunge from about 50 feet straight into the abyss. An undercut, bowl-shaped depression in the wall is completely overgrown with Bushy Black Coral. Descend over the wall, and a huge snaggle-toothed barracuda is likely to be watching you from the bottom. As a bonus, divers that venture to Northwest Point can take an excursion to the tiki-hut-lined white sand beach—one of the best you'll ever set foot on.

PHOTOS: MATT WEEDON

#7: HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

West Caicos, a small uninhabited island on the western fringe of the Caicos Bank, offers steep and deep walls, coral canyons, great sponge growth and Highway to Heaven. A 45-degree slope of white sand cascades down from about 40 feet to nearly 140 feet between huge coral-encrusted bluffs. A large school of black and silver Atlantic Spadefish often welcomes divers. Caribbean Reef Sharks, which seem rather oblivious to divers, are also on the viewing menu.

#6: TUNNELS

Grand Turk continually amazes divers with the health and vibrant nature of its reef. While lush soft corals sway in the minimal current, healthy boulder and star coral formations blanket the bottom. Make your way through a large coral-encrusted tunnel and be met by a troop of Black Jacks. Plate corals plummet over the edge and Purple Sea Fans cover the wall.


Yellow-throat Pike Blenny

#5: GIBBS CAY

No trip to Grand Turk would be complete without a visit to Gibbs Cay, the Turks and Caicos' own intimate version of Stingray City. Arrive and you will be met by a group of eager and friendly stingrays that will hang out for hours.

#4: DOUBLE D

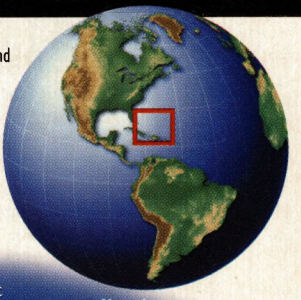
At French Cay, a tiny speck of an island about an hour boat ride south of Provo, the reefs run right up to a steep drop-off. With thick gorgonians, sea plumes and sea fans all over the top of the reef, it is comparable to diving in the western Pacific. At Double D, soft corals act as a home base for a large circling school of Horse-eye Jacks, while beefy Reef Sharks patrol the waters nearby.

#3: G-SPOT

At G-Spot, also off French Cay, huge deep-water gorgonians cover the wall. Giant barrel sponges are interspersed with bright Yellow Tube Sponges, and large Spotted Eagle Rays are not uncommon. In fact, nearly everything seems bigger than normal at French Cay.


A wall of Orange Elephant Ear Sponges.

Skin Diver GUIDE TURKS AND CAICOS





GETTING THERE: American Airlines, TWA, SkyKing, Interisland Airways, Turks & Caicos Airways and Delta offer daily service to the Turks and Caicos. To view their schedules visit www.tcisearch.com, click: Airlines.

FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Year-round. The seasons are exactly the same as in the U.S., with winter only slightly cooler than the summer. **Topside Climate:** Average 83°F. Hottest months are September and October, 90 to 95°F. Easterly tradewinds keep things comfortable year-round. **Water Temperature:** Average 76 to 82°F. **Exchange Rate:** U.S. Dollar. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time.

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Golden Hamlet.

#2: THE PLANE

Across the deep Turks Passage from Grand Turk, South Caicos is affectionately known by locals as the "Big South." With only one hotel/dive operation and a small marine biology school next door, there is very little diving going on. The Plane, the only diveable plane wreck in the TCI, has the fuselage and wings of a wrecked Convair F29A. It rests 50 feet from the drop-off, in about 55 feet of water. Tossed around by several major storms, it is now completely overgrown with coral growth. Bright yellow schoolmasters congregate in the fuselage. Eels seem to have taken up residence in every open space. Being so close to the drop-off, you can also be on the lookout for passing sharks and rays.

#1: EAGLE'S NEST

Taking the top spot is the Eagle's Nest, another dive site from South Caicos. Also known as the Point or the Grotto, several large sand patches near the wall are home to some of the biggest stingrays you will ever find. A large, mushroom-shaped coral head acts as a major cleaning station for big groupers. And, the drop-off is covered in sponges and cascading plate corals. The highlight of the dive, however, is the chance to see schools (think 25) of Spotted Eagle Rays. The reef seems to act as a funnel for "big stuff" from the shallow banks out to the deep water. Caribbean Reef Sharks are frequently encountered, as well as the occasional Great Hammerhead.

Special thanks to Oasis Divers, Sea Eye Diving, Blue Water Divers and Beachcomber House in Grand Turk; Salt Cay Divers and Pirate's Hideaway in Salt Cay; and Dive Provo, Provo Turtle Divers, Big Blue Unlimited and Comfort Suites in Provo.

PHOTO: MATT WEEDON

Ray of Hope

The Eagle Ray completed by artist, Rogest, on September 10th is available for purchase with all proceeds benefitting the "*Rescue One Relief Fund*"



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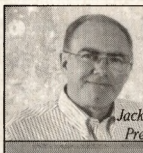
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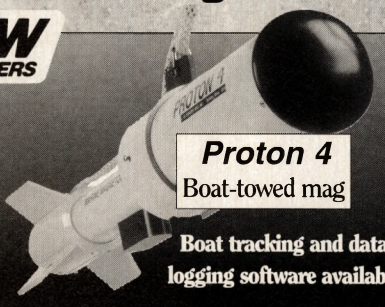
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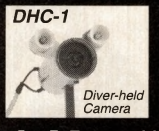
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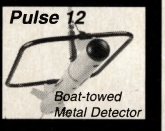
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While this variation is not present in every OPV, the CPSC requires that all units be replaced with new assemblies. Customers should return their BCs to an OMS dealer for a free upgrade.

For a listing of those serial numbers being recalled, call (845) 457-1617, or visit www.omsdive.com.

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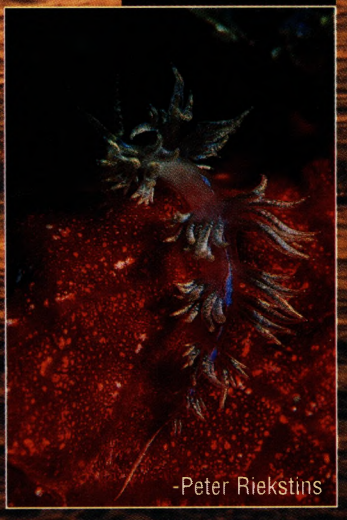
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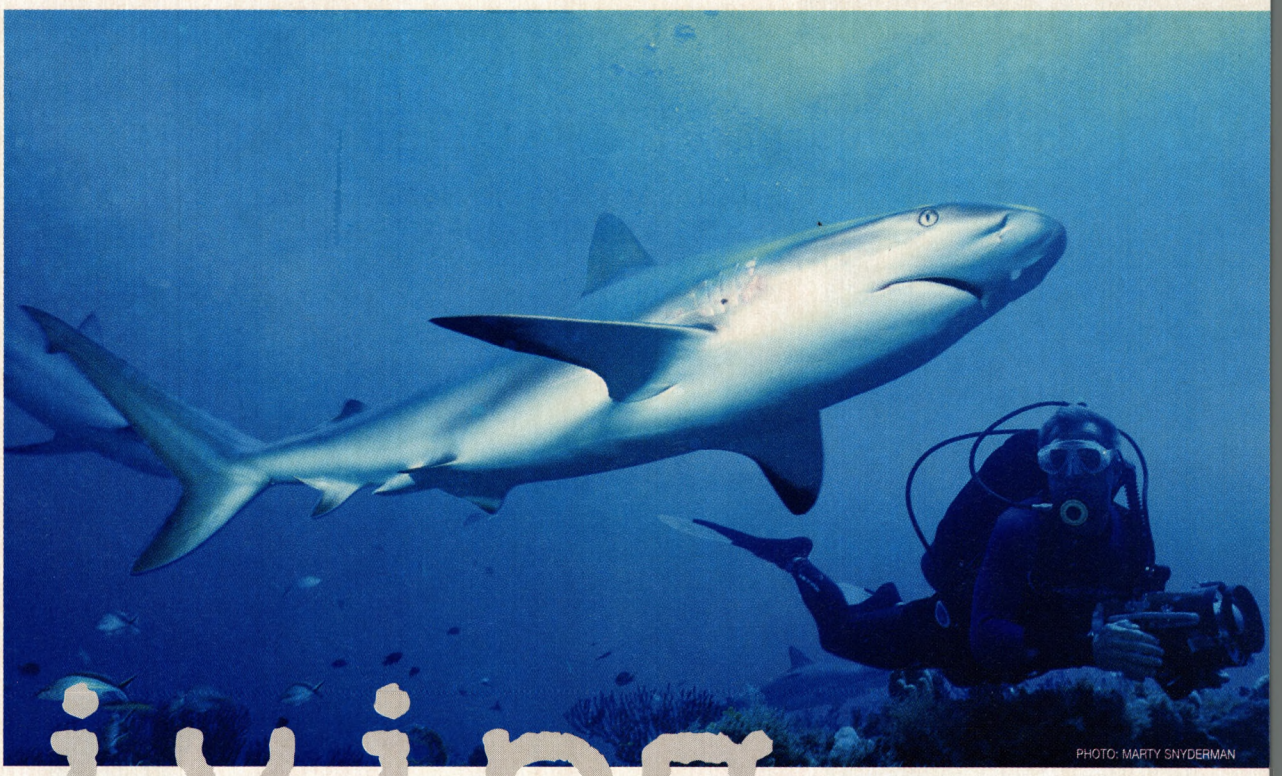
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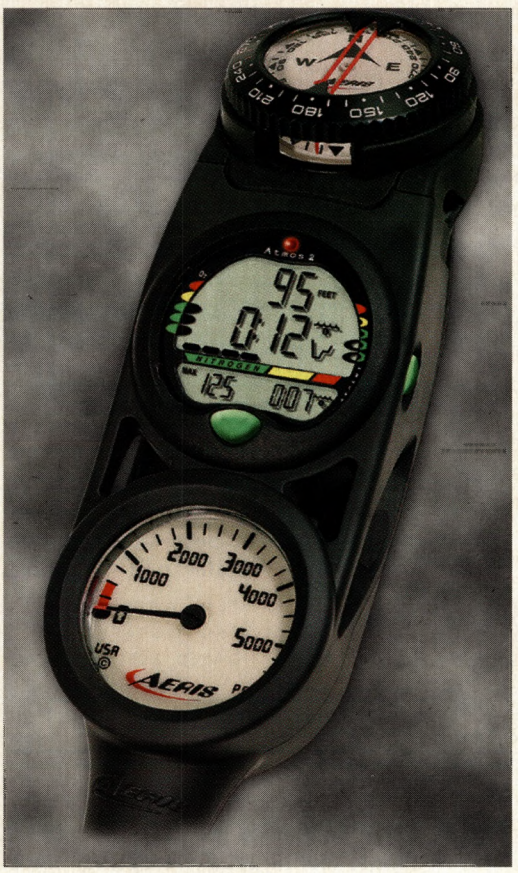
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THESE WORDS NEED TO BE USED when describing AERIS's latest line of dive computers, the ATMOS 2.

The ATMOS 2 dive computer has all the features you would expect from an advanced dive computer....and then some. The computer face is designed with color-coded bar graphs; green, yellow, and red. These graphs monitor three very important diving parameters: nitrogen accumulation, oxygen loading, and your personal ascent rate. Proper monitoring of these graphs allow you to select the personal degree of conservatism you wish to build into each dive, putting you in control of your margin of safety.

To further enhance your safety, AERIS has included a red flashing LED that illuminates when you are in a situation you may need to manage. This LED flashes in conjunction with your audible alarms.

The computer is activated either by pushing the button while you are doing your pre-dive planning, or the water will activate it when you enter. The computer face layout is easy to understand. The over-sized digits make it very easy to read. Multiple user-settings allow you to personalize the computer to your style of diving. Some of these would be; variable PO2 & Nitrogen accumulation alarms, maximum depth & dive time remaining alarms, to name but a few. Each computer has a built-in simulator for dive-planning purposes.

You can even control the backlight duration. Nitrox programming and PC downloading (up to 250 dives) are key features of this computer.You can order the computer with a back-up knife attached directly to the console. What better place to mount a back-up knife?

The optional quick-disconnect is a must for today's traveling diver. For those divers who already own a console and are interested in a back-up, the ATMOS 2 may be configured as a wrist unit, hose mount, or retractor.

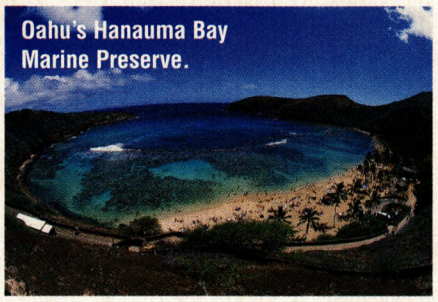
It appears that AERIS has again raised the benchmark for computer development. The ATMOS 2 computer is the finest combination of features and styling that this writer has seen to date.

For more information, or an interactive demo, please visit your nearest AERIS Dealer or AERIS' Website: www.diveaeris.com.

Hawaiian Passion

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID FLEETHAM

A GREAT NUMBER OF DIVERS CHOOSE Hawaii as a destination for the crystal clear Pacific waters and unique marine life, but many of these same divers have a second agenda for their selection. To accompany the ocean element, the world's most isolated island group has myriad additional offerings that make it a favorite for couples. Indeed, nearly 10,000 couples come to Hawaii each year to take "the plunge," and I'm not talking about the ocean now, although a few of these ceremonies are being held underwater with a school of bright yellow butterflyfish as witnesses.


Oahu's Hanauma Bay Marine Preserve.

On Kauai, the geologically oldest of the main islands, a helicopter ride past Speilberg's favorite tropical cliffs, The Na Pali Coast (see Jurassic Park) and then down through Waimea Canyon (Hawaii's Grand Canyon) is a must for the courageous. Keeping their feet on the ground, others search out the hidden beach where South Pacific was filmed, and spend the afternoon indulging themselves in the waves.

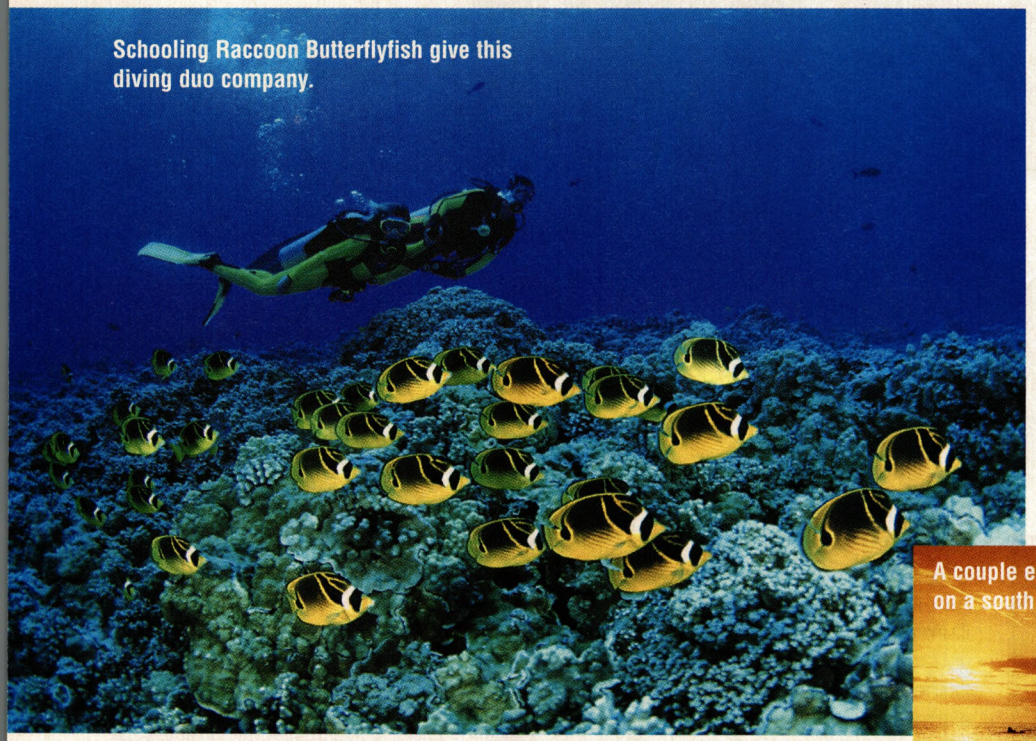
For those who don't want to leave the metropolitan feeling behind, Honolulu on the island of Oahu is America's 11th largest city and boasts valleys with waterfalls, rain forests and a nearly mile-high mountain range all within the city limits. Not to mention coral reefs and the golden sands of Waikiki beach. Outside the city, Hanauma Bay, a volcanically circular fish bowl with an opening to the Pacific offers protected waters and colorful fish. Oahu's Northshore is rural Hawaii combined with the most famous surfing spots on the planet located right off some of the most romantic beaches in the state.

After a morning dive, couples on Maui can catch the afternoon tradewinds off Sprecklesville or for the more proficient Hookipa, the "Mecca" for windsurfers from around the world. There are also rain forest hikes, a real Paniolo (cowboy) Rodeo, mountain biking down Maui's 10,000 foot Haleakala Crater past pineapple fields to the ocean or, for that flying feeling, hang gliding or paragliding the same volcano.



The Big Island offers romance at over 2,000°F. Kilauea Volcano has been almost continuously erupting since 1983 and is noted for its approachable lava flows. Liquid rock is one of the most incredible sights on earth and snuggling up to watch the fireworks at night as the lava hits the ocean makes for life long honeymoon memories.

Clear warm water that hosts lush reefs, myriad fish (30% of which are found nowhere else in the world), wrecks and spectacular marine life encounters, as well as fragrant vegetation and perfect sun-kissed days topside: Whatever your dreams, Hawaii is a great place for a wedding, honeymoon or romantic getaway. Not only do the islands exude passion and beauty, but they are also a blast for the adventurous, both topside and underwater. And, of course, don't forget to pack your mask and snorkel. SDM


Schooling Raccoon Butterflyfish give this diving duo company.


A couple enjoys a sunset stroll on a south Maui beach.

Not only do the islands exude passion and beauty, but they are also a blast for the adventurous, both topside and underwater.

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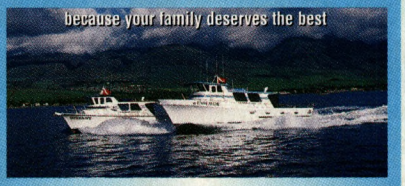
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Sun Dancer II to Cruise Belize

TEXT BY SUE HAMILTON

Peter Hughes is pleased to announce that the flagship of the Dancer Fleet, the M/V *Sun Dancer II*, will re-locate from its present home in Palau, Micronesia, to Belize, Central America. *Sun Dancer II* will host its last guests in Palau in May, and then travel east across the Pacific and through the Panama Canal to reach her new home. She will replace the M/V *Wave Dancer*, the most popular Dancer Fleet live-aboard of all time, and will commence Belize charters on August 17, 2002.

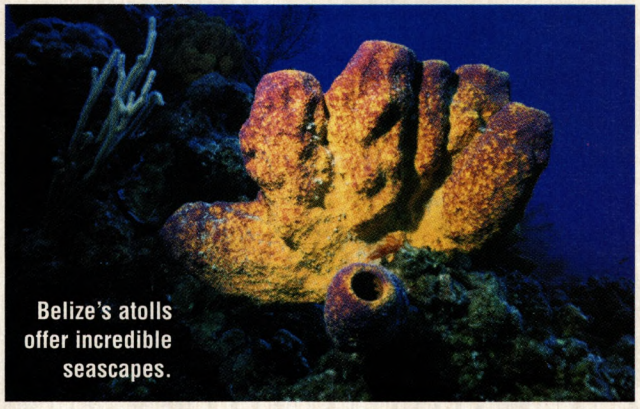


The *Sun Dancer II*: redefining the word "luxury."

The *Sun Dancer II* is unquestionably the largest and most luxurious of the entire Dancer Fleet (currently operating in nine different locations around the diving world) and will provide visiting divers a combination that's tough to beat: the world-class diving of the famous atolls of Belize and a vessel that features staterooms and amenities better suited to the QE2 than most diving live-aboards. At 138 feet in length and carrying 20 guests, this vessel designed for high-end Pacific tours, will definitely "raise the bar" in live-aboard diving in Belize. Tours are also priced competitively with other Caribbean live-aboards, so the added space and luxury is a bonus!



Belize diving is often ranked as the "best" in the Caribbean, and Lighthouse Reef (with over 40 dive sites, including the famous "Blue Hole") is one of the most eagerly sought out dive vacations. The walls are steep and sheer, the marine life prolific, and the almost total absence of development on the offshore atolls ensures that water quality will remain high. Although Belize has the second largest barrier reef in the world, most serious divers prefer to cruise to the offshore atolls for the best diving. The three atolls (Turneffe Island, Lighthouse Reef and Glovers Reef) are approximately 35 to 60 miles from the mainland respectively.



Belize's atolls offer incredible seascapes.

Palau, often ranked as the "best" diving on the other side of the world, will not be without a Dancer Fleet live-aboard for long! The M/V *Star Dancer*, currently in Papua New Guinea, will begin servicing both PNG and Palau starting in January, 2003. As veteran Pacific divers know, weather is the key factor to great diving vacations in this part of the world, and *Star Dancer*'s split itinerary will allow our guests to enjoy the best diving these two world-class dive destinations have to offer.

Guests always rave about Belize diving, especially from a live-aboard and finding a suitable vessel to fill *Wave Dancer*'s shoes was going to be a challenge.

"We knew we had to put the biggest and best vessel the Dancer Fleet had to offer in Belize and that would logically be the *Sun Dancer II*." said Peter Hughes, "But at the same time, we also wanted to continue to offer our guests the fantastic diving Palau and PNG have to offer. This arrangement works out well for everyone!"

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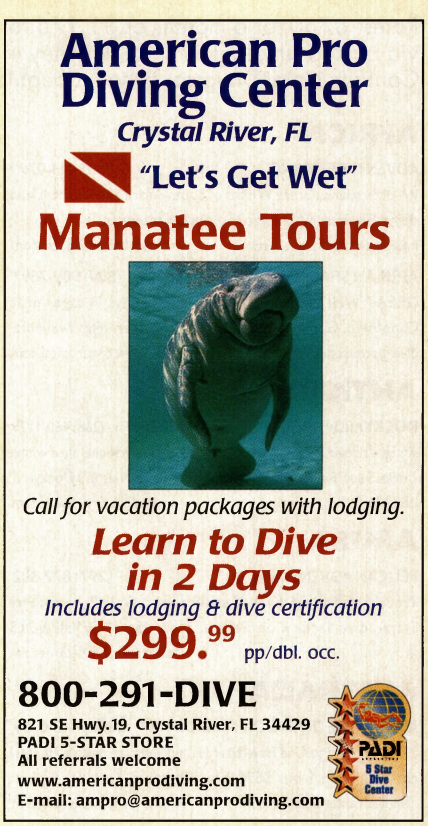


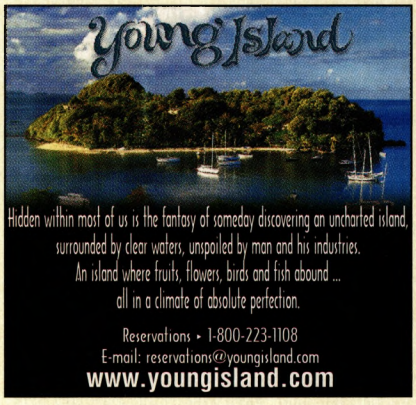
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PHOTO: JESSE CANCELMO

A Data Based Approach to Tek Diver Equipment Configuration

BY KARL SHREEVES

EVER HEAR TWO TEKKERS ARGUING ABOUT GEAR?

"Hard plate!"

"Soft harness!"

"Hard plate!"

"Soft harness!"

"Tastes great!"

"Less filling!"

Nothing stands the neck hairs on some tekkers faster than taking sides on what's the "right" equipment and configuration for tek. At one extreme, we have, "Hey, chill. Like, do whatever you wanna. It's cool. Think we should wear our fins on our feet this time?" On the other side, we have, "Ten-hut! This is the one and only right equipment and the one and only right way to wear it! Do not bother to think! Salute our fearless exalted infallible leader who thinks for you!"

There's another approach, reflected in "Technical Diving Equipment Configuration Based on Objective Data and Theory," a paper (published in *The Undersea Journal*, written by myself) that looks at the equipment question based on behavioral theory, the tek community's consensus standard and particularly, hard data from beta/field trials for a tek diving course. The paper reports whether the observed performance of beta/field trainees (n=27), or other data, support or fail to support particular gear or configurations. Surprisingly (or perhaps not), hard data fails to support either extreme.

1 Theory and the test/field trials support standardization where interteam response times are important, such as air sharing and gas shutdown assistance. Generally, based on trainee responses in simulated emergencies, the data support standardizing divers breathing long hose and putting the primary first stage on the right side of the manifold. Specifically, the data support a community standard for gas sharing and first stage location—but not necessarily breathing long hose and primary first stage on the right. That simply appears to be the emerging community standard.

2 The data do not support the plate harness over the fabric harness. There were no performance differences between the systems irrespective of what a subject used. Note that the trials involved technical harnesses paired with wing-type BCs,



not conventional BC jackets.

While hard plate or fabric showed no differences, the data do support specific harness details, however.

3 The data support rigid hip D-rings and adjustable shoulder D-rings. There were noted performance problems when a harness lacked these. So, while it's not important whether you have a plate harness or a fabric harness, you probably don't want one of either kind that lacks these.

4 The data do not support harnesses without adjustable quick release shoulder buckles over those that have them, nor do the data support having only one D-ring per shoulder. No major performance differences showed between either type.

Performance data most strongly support having adjustable quick release shoulder buckles and two D-rings per shoulder, but not strongly enough to justify making them requirements. The idea that such buckles are "failure points" wasn't supported by the data. There were no failures and at least one manufacturer claims it has found zero failure incidents in use with these buckles on their own or on competitive models.

5 The data do not support a standard for wearing all stage/deco cylinders on one side or on both sides. There were no interteam performance problems related to gas switch procedures, even when teammates differed with one wearing cylinders all left and others on both sides. However, it was noted that trainees need to be consistent as individuals; confusion resulted several times when divers weren't consistent in where they wear high and low oxygen stage/deco cylinders. The study involved only two cylinders and did not involve scootering.

6 The data support the need for following a formal gas switch procedure. All gas switch errors (going to the wrong gas) resulted when trainees failed to follow the formal switch procedure they were taught. All failures to catch gas switch errors by a teammate resulted from both trainees failing to follow the procedure. No incorrect gas switches occurred when trainees followed the procedure. The data also support standard markings for stage/deco cylinders (name, analyzed content and maximum depth).

There were some other findings, but you get the gist: The data support a need to standardize the long hose and first stage locations, and there are observable performance differences in some equipment details. Some gear aspects, such as the hard plate versus the fabric harness, did not appear to affect performance one way or another. So the data neither support the "anything goes" nor the "only one right way" positions.

Science never proves anything. It gathers data that supports or fails to support theories. New data may add support, or it may refute prior data and cause a theory revision. That can happen with equipment configuration data, and that's good. It's how new ideas replace old.

Science never proves anything. It gathers data that supports or fails to support theories. New data may add support, or it may refute prior data and cause a theory revision. That can happen with equipment configuration data, and that's good. It's how new ideas replace old. The unbiased apply the best hard data they have, and with respect to equipment configuration, that data is not supporting the extremes.

You can bet a few people will cling to their extreme equipment views despite the hard data. Be patient and smile. Remember, there are still people who insist that the earth is flat, and facts don't mean anything to them, either.

Dive In To Earth Day

The Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL), along with other environmental organizations, scientists, divers, aquariums and students, will be hosting the third annual Dive In To Earth Day during the week of April 15 to 22, 2002. Last year's event brought together over 32,000 people and this year even more are expected to participate. Events include underwater clean-up, fish and coral surveys, and aquarium exhibits.

For a list of activities in your area, visit www.coral.org.

SEASPACE 2002

The SEASPACE Scuba Diving, Adventures Sports and Travel Expo will swing into Houston, TX, on June 8 and 9. This year's expo will include IMAX cinematographer Bob Talbot and *Andrea Doria* wreck expert Gary Gentile. More than 200 booths will be at the Reliant Arena for participants to visit with experts on various outdoor sports and exotic travel destinations. A swimming pool will be available for visitors to try out scuba, snorkeling and kayaking.

For more information, visit www.seaspace.com or call (713) 467-6675.

Ocean Fest 2002

Lauderdale-by-the Sea Chamber of Commerce presents Ocean Fest 2002. This year's show will feature over 200 dive-related exhibits under giant tents at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to the dive exhibits, there will be food and beverage vendors, music, fashion shows, free seminars and over $25,000 in prizes given away.

For more information, visit www.oceanfest.com.

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Emmy Award-winning underwater cinematographer and *Skin Diver* contributing photographer Jonathan Bird is teaching comprehensive underwater photography courses in tropical locations throughout 2002 and 2003, beginning in August on the *Fiji Aggressor*. Learn from a pro while diving the best spots on Earth.

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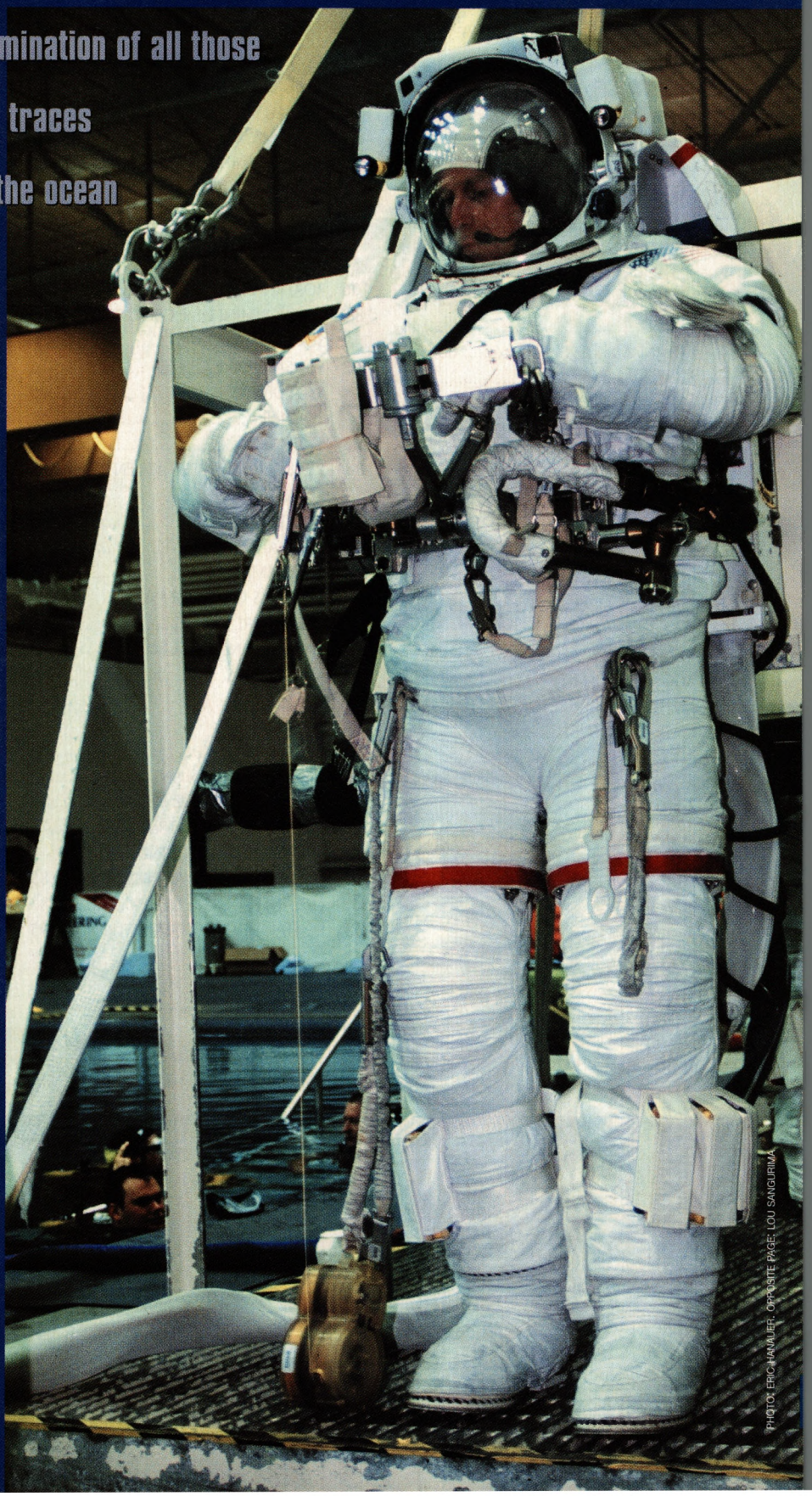
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"Looking back, it's my love of the ocean that got me into diving; diving caught my interest in space; and commercial diving got me into working techniques on how to do this stuff. So this is the culmination of all those goals and desires, but it all traces back to falling in love with the ocean at a young age." —*Mike Gernhardt*



PHOTOS: ERIC JANAUER. OPPOSITE PAGE: LOU SANGURIMA

NOTHING I'D EVER SEEN, HEARD OR read about a shuttle launch prepared me for the real thing. Everything happens too quickly. Night is instantaneously transformed into day as the booster engines ignite. The incandescent light of the rocket exhaust, so bright that its image burns into my retina, is followed by a long plume of dark smoke as the shuttle swiftly soars into infinity. It takes 15 seconds for the sound to reach us at the viewing stand, three miles away. When it does, I feel it as much as hear it, rumbling deep within my chest. Two minutes into the flight I can see the fiery trails of the booster engines at cutoff. At eight and a half minutes the spacecraft is in orbit, a brilliant point of light racing through the night sky.

The public and the media have become blasé about shuttle missions, but at Cape Canaveral every launch is a happening. STS 104 was even more special, because there was one of us on board. Mission specialist Mike Gernhardt is a diver, the most experienced ever to soar into space. A veteran of three previous shuttle missions, Mike once was a commercial diver and a resort instructor, and is a recognized authority on decompression theory, both in space and underwater. He's been diving since the age of eight. It's his passion, his profession and his non-traditional means of becoming an astronaut.

DIVING INTO SPACE



Mike's inspiration came on early fishing trips to Florida with his dad. "It caught me deep in my soul as a young kid. Diving was always my motivation and almost everything I've done was connected with it." He had read Cousteau in third grade and made his first dives at Barbuda in the Caribbean. As soon as he turned 12, Mike got certified and dived everywhere he could in his native Ohio, from stone quarries to Lake Erie.

It was in high school physics class that he became fascinated with the universe. "I put the connection between diving and space together and decided I wanted to be an astronaut. People told me to join the Air Force, but my love was the ocean, and I wanted to take that path. I made decisions that wouldn't preclude me from being an astronaut, but didn't just go out and get the conventional astronaut resumé."



Astronauts being videotaped during an underwater exercise.

Gernhardt's professional diving resumé began at age 17, working the summer as a divemaster at Virgin Islands Diving School. The owner, Marv Ellis, sent him through an NASDS instructor course. After two summers of leading tourists on resort dives, Mike was ready for new challenges. By this time he was majoring in physics at Vanderbilt University and had done an independent study on bubble dynamics, inspired by Dr. Christian Lambertsen's work. Today, bubble mechanics is accepted decompression theory, but at the time it was a pioneering concept.

In the summer of 1976, the 20-year-old sophomore applied to every commercial diving company in the Gulf of Mexico. Intrigued by his research, Jerry Evans of Santa Fe International offered Mike a job as a tender if he could pass the written test. Despite no commercial training, he aced it. It was the start of a nine-year career in the oil fields, summers at first, then full-time after graduation. "Initially I was a clear water diver, and not into welding and working in the mud. Then I got intrigued with the challenge and art of getting a construction dive done against limited bottom time and a lot of environmental stress. As a commercial diver you learn tricks, how to cheat and make the dive as easy as you can. Why bust your butt if you don't have to? It's hard enough anyhow." He would eventually adapt some of these techniques for use in space.

After graduation, Mike joined Ocean Systems as an engineer, repairing oil platforms off the coast of Peru. For three years, despite his parents' reservations, he was a full-time diver. "My mom isn't afraid about my going into space, but was scared all the time [when] I did commercial diving."

In 1980, Mike entered graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, studying under Lambertsen, who was also medical director of Ocean Systems. For the next 10 years he worked between the university and the field, developing and implementing a variety of decompression tables for commercial diving.

When Gernhardt discusses decompression theory, he becomes animated, leading the listener into a complex maze of technical theory and application at breakneck speed. At these times, the interviewer keeps his mouth

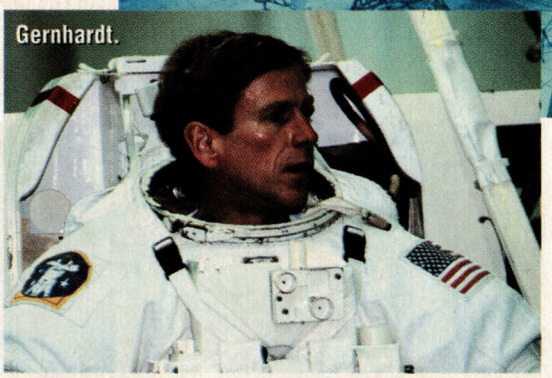
PROFILE BY ERIC HANAUER

DIVING INTO SPACE



Neutral buoyancy laboratories such as this one serve to recreate what astronauts might experience in space.

shut, hoping Mike doesn't realize how far he's lagging behind. The bottom line is that these tables allowed more bottom time with shorter decompression and more safety. "I learned a lot of stuff...firsthand, saw a lot of bends and got a good sense for the different profiles...had the unique opportunity to directly integrate academics and operations...and to work with Dr. Lambertsen. The tables we generated are being used by Oceaneering to this day."



Gernhardt.

The company was grooming him for an executive position and agreed to pay him a retainer while in graduate school. Combined with a dean's fellowship, this allowed amenities beyond the reach of a typical graduate student, including a nice apartment overlooking the river and a Porsche.

Then it was back to work: Mexico, South America, the North Sea and Southeast Asia, mixed gas and saturation diving, going as deep as 640 feet. Oceaneering International bought Ocean Systems in 1983, and assigned Mike to the advanced technical group in Houston, working on robotics and decompression. In conjunction with Lambertsen, who continued to be a mentor, he developed new tables on contract for the British department of health and human services.

But how does a commercial diver become an astronaut? By age 29, Gernhardt was a vice president at Oceaneering, heading up special projects. He had applied to NASA after graduate school, but just missed the interview stage. This convinced him he needed a Ph.D. He also convinced Oceaneering president John Huff to form a space division of the company, aiming for NASA contracts. Mike gathered a team of about 70 engineers. "I was the old man in this group. Most of the kids were 23, 24 and were superstars. My job was to stimulate them with ideas. I gave them the ball." They worked on projects like manipulators, umbilicals and cryogenic systems. Mike continued his studies of decompression theory and earned his doctorate in 1991. He applied again for the astronaut corps and this time made the cut. "It was tough to leave the company. I had this vision of commercial space, which is still my long term goal."

At NASA, Mike continued to apply commercial diving techniques to space. One innovation was a body restraint tether for spacewalks, which allowed astronauts to have both hands free. Some senior personnel said it would never work, but Mike showed how they could save 100 hours on assembly sequences. It's now standard issue.

His current project involves leading a multi-center team of decompression experts to develop improved decompression methods for spacewalks. Using a combination of heavy and mild exercise combined with oxygen pre-breathing, his technique improves safety and cuts in half the time required for decompression prior to spacewalks.

Mike had done two spacewalks on his previous shuttle missions and made three more on STS 104. His task was to attach the airlock module to the International Space Station. On the final walk, he and James Reilly became the first astronauts to do Extra Vehicular Activities from the airlock.

"Your whole life you hear that the world is three-fourths water, and you accept that intellectually. It takes getting up into space to [see] that. ...I feel very much in tune with the ocean. I understand [its personality]...I know how to work with it.

[Mike's] current project involves leading a multi-center team of decompression experts to develop improved decompression methods for spacewalks.

"I've only spent 1,000 hours or so in space and maybe that's not enough; maybe you've got to live up there for six months to really understand it. Like any other environment you have to understand the parameters and how to work in it. I learned that from commercial diving and that's helped me a lot with the spacewalks. For me, doing the first walks from the space station, using the new decompression protocol is like the ultimate dive.

"Looking back, it's my love of the ocean that got me into diving, diving caught my interest in space, and commercial diving got me into working techniques on how to do this stuff. So this is the culmination of all those goals and desires, but it all traces back to falling in love with the ocean at a young age."

PHOTOS, TOP TO BOTTOM: LOU SANGURIMA; ERIC HANAUER

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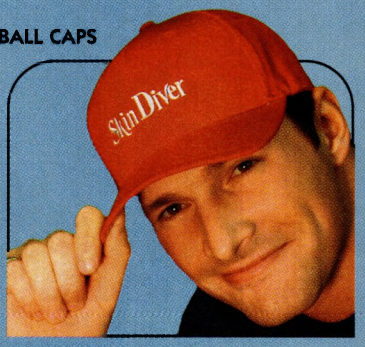
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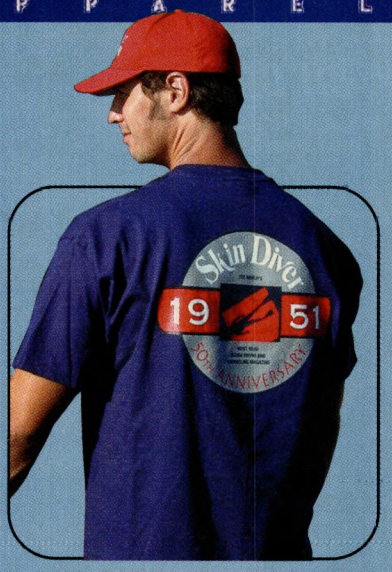
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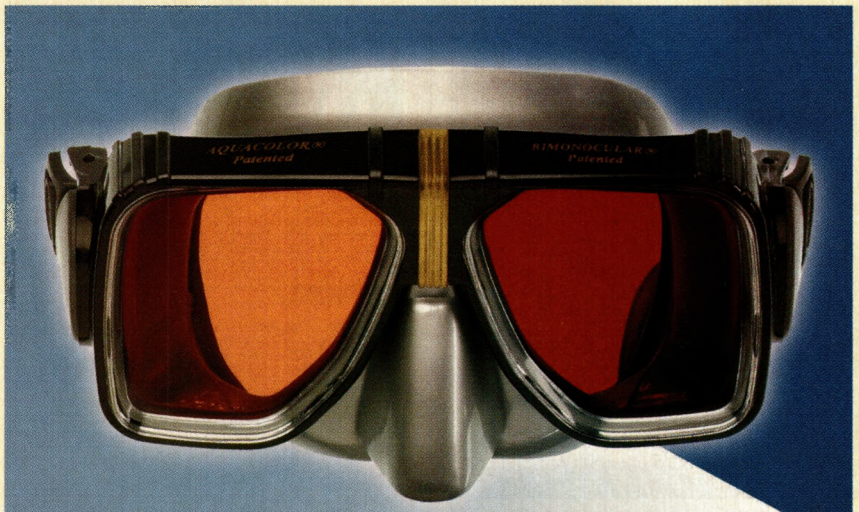


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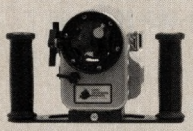
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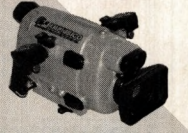
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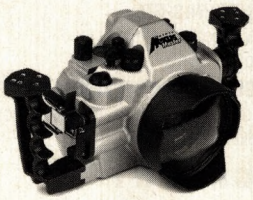
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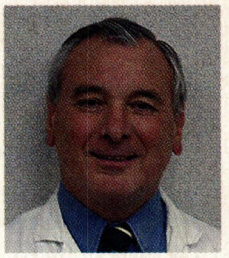
Contest open to photographers of all levels. The editors of *Skin Diver* will select five finalist images. These images will be posted on *Skin Diver* Online by August 1, 2002, and *Skin Diver* readers will help select the winner. Runner-up photos will be featured in the December 2002 issue.

*For magazines mailed to subscribers only. Grand prize will include a first-time use payment of $800. Each submission becomes property of *Skin Diver* magazine (photos will not be returned). *Skin Diver* is not responsible for lost or damaged submissions. Entries submitted without entry fee will be disqualified.

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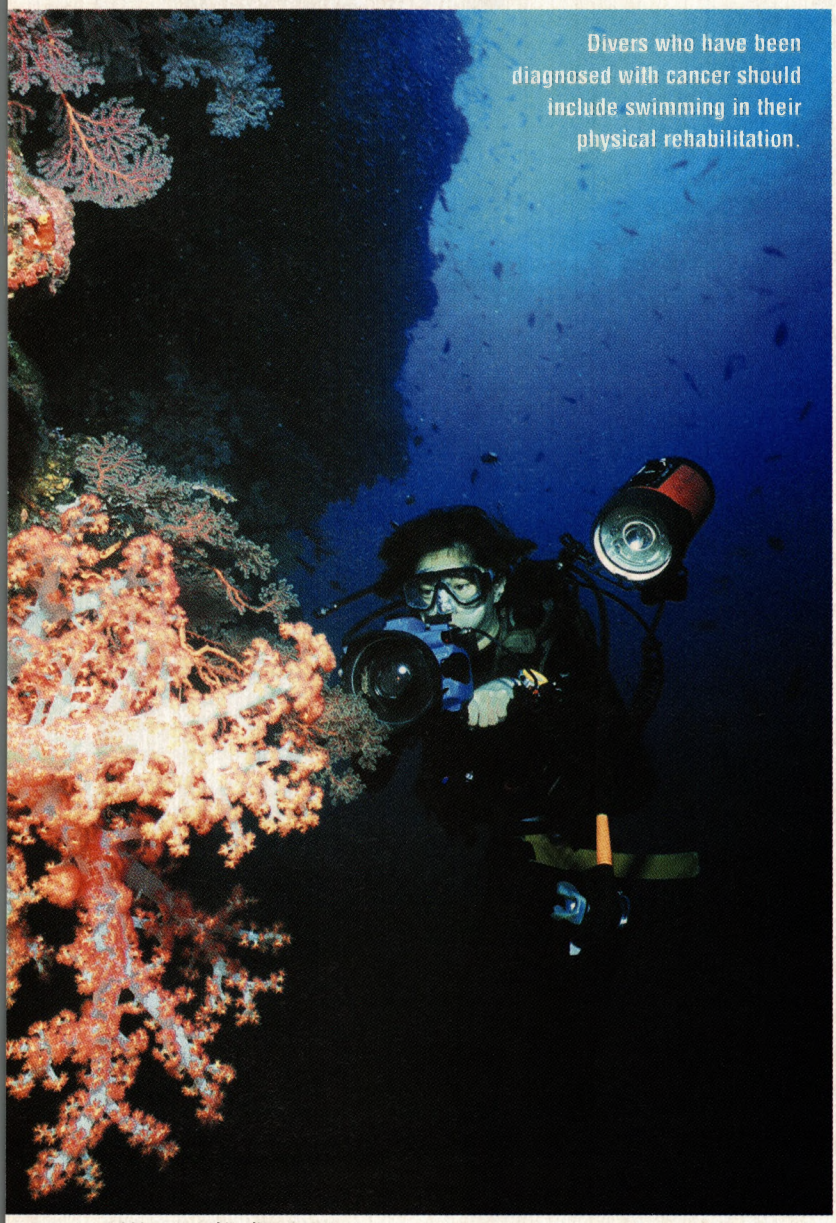
BY FRED BOVE, M.D., PH.D.

Diving After Cancer



I NOTICED A RECENT SPATE OF QUERIES FROM CANCER survivors who want to learn sport diving or return to diving after treatment. We have learned to cure many forms of cancer and return cancer survivors to normal lives. The diagnosis of cancer does not end your diving career. Breast, prostate and colon cancer are common forms of cancer that can be cured by a combination of surgery, chemotherapy or both. These and other forms of cancer occur in men and women who are active divers. They are not just diseases of old age.

Breast Cancer Having this diagnosis means that a woman will undergo a combination of surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. The surgery can remove a lump or a breast, and can include the muscles of the chest underlying the breast and lymph glands in the axilla (armpit area). The earlier the disease is detected, the less extensive the surgery will be. Mammography is the best screening method for early detection, but all women should perform self examinations even if they undergo screening with mammography. After surgery, there is usually a period of chemotherapy or radiation. Whenever surgery is done, physical rehabilitation should follow for three to four months to restore function to the arm and shoulder muscles. For divers, swimming should be included in the exercise program. Chemotherapy and radiation for all forms of cancer causes a loss of appetite, fatigue and loss of endurance.



Divers who have been diagnosed with cancer should include swimming in their physical rehabilitation.

Prostate Cancer Similar rules apply for return to diving after treatment with surgery, radiation or chemotherapy. The amount of surgery is related to early detection, which is made possible by a blood test, the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA). Physical conditioning can usually be started three months after therapy is completed. Check with the surgeon to be sure you are ready for exercise after surgery. During the time that chemotherapy or radiation is being administered, most patients do not want to exercise heavily, but once completed, the unpleasant side effects depart within two to three months, and exercise can be started in order to return to good physical condition for diving.

Colon Cancer This is treated by combined surgery and chemotherapy. Here again, early detection makes a tremendous difference in both the odds for survival without recurrence and the severity of the therapy. Screening for colon cancer involves testing the stool for blood, and undergoing an endoscopic examination where a thin tube is inserted into the colon through the rectum to visualize the inner lining. In addition to the need to regain physical fitness, some patients require a permanent colostomy, whereby the colon is connected to an external collection bag on the abdomen. Even a colostomy does not end a diving career. I have personally witnessed two divers who managed their colostomy without a problem during diving. The colostomy requires special care to be sure that the seal does not leak when submerged and that gases do not get trapped and over expand the colostomy bag during ascent.

We have learned to cure many forms of cancer and return cancer survivors to normal lives. The diagnosis of cancer does not end your diving career.

The clear message about cancer is that the chance of a cure is excellent, but requires detecting the cancer early. Reporting periodically to your physician for cancer screening is essential to surviving the effects of this curable disease.

Learn more about diving medicine at www.scubamed.com.

PHOTO: ERIC HANAUER



In an uncharacteristic move for hermit crabs, this one had wandered from its normal hermitage of a shell and taken up residence in a piece of petrified antler coral.

WHERE TO FIND THEM

Dozens of species of hermit crabs classified in subfamily *Paguroidea* are found in shallow tropical waters around the world.

The High-rise Hermit Crab

BY NED AND ANNA DELOACH WITH PAUL HUMANN

CORAL REEFS SHOWCASE SUCH AN INCREDIBLE ARRAY OF natural wonders that, all too often, new divers race about the reef in an enthusiastic attempt to take in everything, and regrettably, in their haste, often fail to notice anything clearly. And, even more unsettling, I have heard novices, with less than a dozen dives to their credit, confess after surfacing that they saw nothing of interest at all while underwater.

Fortunately, there is a sure-fire remedy for never experiencing a boring dive: first, purchase a marine life identification book at your favorite dive store and second, adopt the cunning of a wildlife stalker. A prime ploy of every skilled hunter is to remain motionless for periods of time—a simple tactic that dramatically increases an observer's ability to notice even the slightest movements. When employing stealth on the reef hundreds of hitherto hidden or camouflaged creatures begin popping into focus. Many delightful little critters give themselves away with the flick of a fin, twitch of an antenna or an emerging head—subtle movements that would be lost to roving eyes.

On our way back to shore from a night dive at the Old Town Pier in Bonaire, my wife Anna and I, long schooled in the patient approach to critter hunting, settled on the outskirts of a shallow rubble pile to see what we might see. I switched off my hand light and together our eyes followed Anna's beam as it swept the bottom. On the third pass, the light stopped fast, Anna elbowed me lightly and eased forward. I followed. I was two feet away when I finally spied the fluttering antennas of a tiny blue-eyed hermit crab bathed in Anna's beam.

What a surprise! Instead of taking up residence inside an abandoned gastropod shell, which is the customary choice of housing for this group of decapods, the hermit had, for some peculiar reason, inserted its abdomen into the hollow end of what appears to be a 6-inch piece of petrified antler coral.

At first the little crab made an awkward attempt to escape the intruding light by slowly dragging its oversized load through the silt. Then, with the strength of Atlas, the mighty-mite flipped the monolithic mobile home on end and scurried off into the dark, balancing the weight of the world on its shoulders.

MILESTONES

BY SCOTT D. JONES

A look at those who helped define diving and continue to push it forward.

The Unlimited Dave Inman

A 30-YEAR VETERAN OF THE DIVE INDUSTRY, DAVE Inman is the founder and owner of Divers Unlimited in Pembroke Pines, FL. From the moment he opened this PADI 5-star training facility, Dave knew his approach to the business of diving had to be "cutting edge," and he's proven his theory successful. Divers Unlimited has been recognized consistently for excellence in diver education, programming and developing future leaders for the dive industry.

Throughout his career, Dave also realized that a key element of dive retailing is keeping divers active. To help accomplish this, Dave supplemented his retail and training operation by building and operating dive resorts throughout the Caribbean in the 1970s and 1980s. In addition to Divers Unlimited, Dave is also president and owner of Biscayne National Underwater Park, Inc., which provides diving services and equipment for Biscayne National Park in South Florida.



Today, Dave continues to be a leader in the dive retailing community through his involvement with trade associations and retailing groups. He is a frequent source of information for environmental, legal and training organizations.

"Colonel" Werner Kurn

WERNER KURN HAS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE growth of scuba retailing in the San Diego, CA, area for more than 25 years. As the founder and current CEO of Ocean Enterprises, Werner is well-known for being a visionary and leader in the dive retail arena. Through his experiences at Ocean Enterprises, Werner expanded his operation to include retail dive stores in Mexico and on numerous military bases around the world. As a result of his efforts, servicemen in Panama City, Pensacola and Key West, FL; Pearl Harbor; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Japan; and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, were able to learn to scuba dive while serving their country. To date, he's been involved with 14 operations at American military bases at home and abroad.



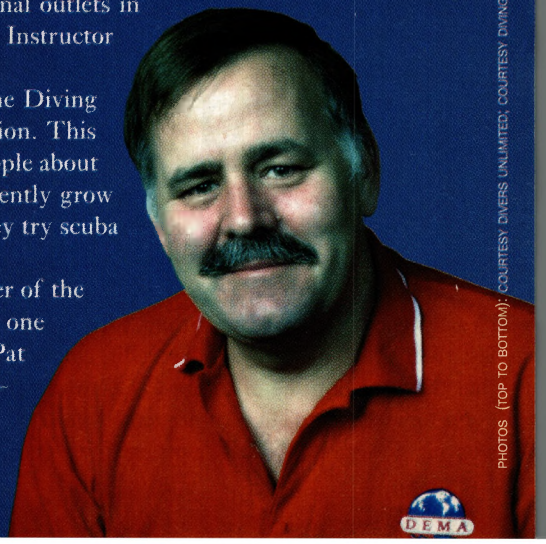
A highly sought-after speaker and seminar presenter on diving issues, Werner has worked hard at giving back to the dive industry for the last three years as a Board Member of the Diving Equipment Marketing Association (DEMA). As the first-ever president to be elected from the retail membership area, Werner has been actively involved in bringing scuba diving to the general public and providing training and business information to the retailer community.

Pat Hammer's Underwater World

PAT HAMMER'S LOVE FOR SCUBA DIVING IS EASY TO SEE FROM THE MOMENT YOU MEET HIM. A TRUE DIVING professional who opened his first dive store in 1974, he's been heavily involved in dive retailing ever since. Since that first store, Berry's Scuba, Pat has opened additional outlets in Georgia and Florida. He currently operates a pair of highly successful Instructor Development Centers in Illinois and is an active PADI Course Director.

For the past three years, Pat has served on the Board of Directors for the Diving Equipment Marketing Association (DEMA), the industry's trade organization. This position provided Pat with the opportunity to continue his quest to teach people about scuba diving and also provide a way for dive retailing and training to efficiently grow across the United States. "I enjoy watching people's faces light up when they try scuba for the first time," he says.

In addition to creating several distinctive specialty courses, Pat is the owner of the Our World Underwater scuba show in Chicago. This show, in its 32nd year, is one of the largest scuba gatherings in the Midwest. Despite his busy schedule, Pat still enjoys teaching occasional classes, including a recent group of handicapped children, and says, "It was great giving them some excitement in their lives through scuba."



PHOTOS (TOP TO BOTTOM): COURTESY DIVERS UNLIMITED; COURTESY DIVING EQUIPMENT MARKETING ASSOCIATION (DEMA)

BY TIFFANY H. CAREY

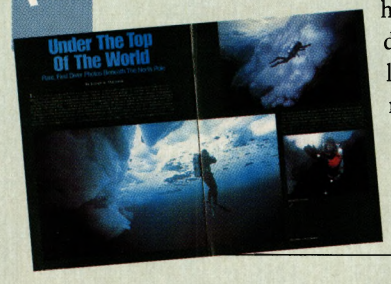
Each month *Skin Diver* looks back through its pages in search of those little nuggets of yesteryear—old equipment, trends of the time, new discoveries—that echo the times and may surprise or shock us. It's good to know your roots and how discoveries of old have helped shape diving of today.

1976

Man's First Dive in the North Pole



Dr. Joseph B. MacInnis, Canadian diving scientist and published author, was obsessed with diving the North Pole. In January 1976, MacInnis wrote for *Skin Diver* a recreation of the first-ever U/W exploration of this frozen region. In 1974, MacInnis and his photographer, Rick Mason, slipped beneath a thick ceiling of white 450 miles from the Canadian shore. Wandering in the "most hostile environment on earth," the men searched to discover an "unseen portion of the planet." After losing his $300 wide-angle lens to a 2-mile journey to the bottom and feeling the aches of flame-cold water penetrating his suit, the men surfaced. MacInnis led three more explorations of the North Pole. His photographer summed it up best through a frost-ladened beard when he said, "That was indeed the damnedest experience ever."



1962

Rock-a-Bye-Fishy?

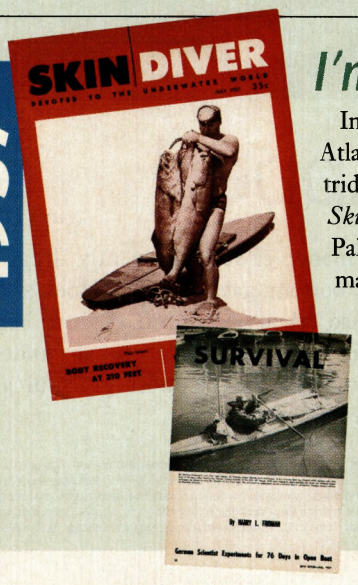


Do fish sleep? In the May 1962 issue, contributor David Gunston set out to answer this question once and for all. Turns out that although fish lack eyelids, they do sleep "at least for some part of their lives." Lampreys, for example, attach themselves to a stone in swift current to take a wee-bo-peep. Basking sharks sometimes lie belly-up at the surface, catching rays on their bellies while they slip away to dreamland. Triggerfish like to sleep head downward, and just in case you were wondering, most wrasse prefer to turn on their sides. There's even a small wrasse in Bermuda that is said to pull the covers over its head before snoozing by diving into the sand and wiggling until it buries itself at the bottom. All you can see is a lump of sand—*breathing*. So when your goldfish at home looks a little glazed over and refuses to respond to your annoying, persistent taps on the tank, show a little courtesy, Goldie needs its beauty rest.



1957

I'm Just Wondering...



In case you're curious about whether or not you could survive crossing the Atlantic in a 14-foot kayak…without more than a few cans of condensed milk, a trident (not of the cinnamon variety) and a speargun…in 76 days…turn to the *Skin Diver* July 1957 issue. A German scientist, Dr. Hannes Lindemann left Las Palmas in the Canary Islands in his little dugout canoe, rigged spare paddles for masts and an inflated rubber outrigger, and successfully set anchor over two months later at the Virgin Island of St. Thomas. Why'd he do it? To see if he could, first of all; then of course to find answers to scientific inquiries such as: "Can sea water be drunk in any dilution whatsoever for survival?" *No.* "Is it possible to retard or suppress sleep drunkenness or fatigue drunkenness?" *Uh, no.* "Is it possible to subside the feeling of intense panic 'to the point of throwing things over the side,' including yourself?" *That'd be…no.*

Glad we could clear that up for you.

DIVE TALES

Every day, divers are humbled by the sheer exhilaration of encountering marine life. From curious Calico Bass and playful dolphins, to sleek sharks and heart-stopping Humpback Whales—to be in their midst is the "stuff" of diving. So, each month, *Skin Diver* guest writers will relive their unique moments under the sea, leaving us at the edge of our seats and aching to get back in the water.



Seal Appeal

SOME OF MY MOST MEMORABLE (AND unexpected) underwater experiences have involved seals and sea lions. These experiences have usually been of two varieties: male animals defending their territory and females being playful.

An example of the first occurred several years ago while diving off the coast of Maine. While photographing a lobster, I suddenly felt myself pinned to the bottom by a large animal lying on top of me. Turning my head around as far as possible, I saw that it was a male Grey Seal. He was easily three times my weight, and there was little I could do to dislodge him. I decided it was best to relax, allowing him to establish his dominance over me. He proceeded to do this by taking my arm in his mouth (his teeth looked about three inches long), followed eventually by my leg. He didn't actually bite me; he just made it clear that he could have, if he had wanted to. After one last insulting tug on my fin, he swam off. My wife Gayle, who had observed my humiliating ordeal, thought it was absolutely hilarious.

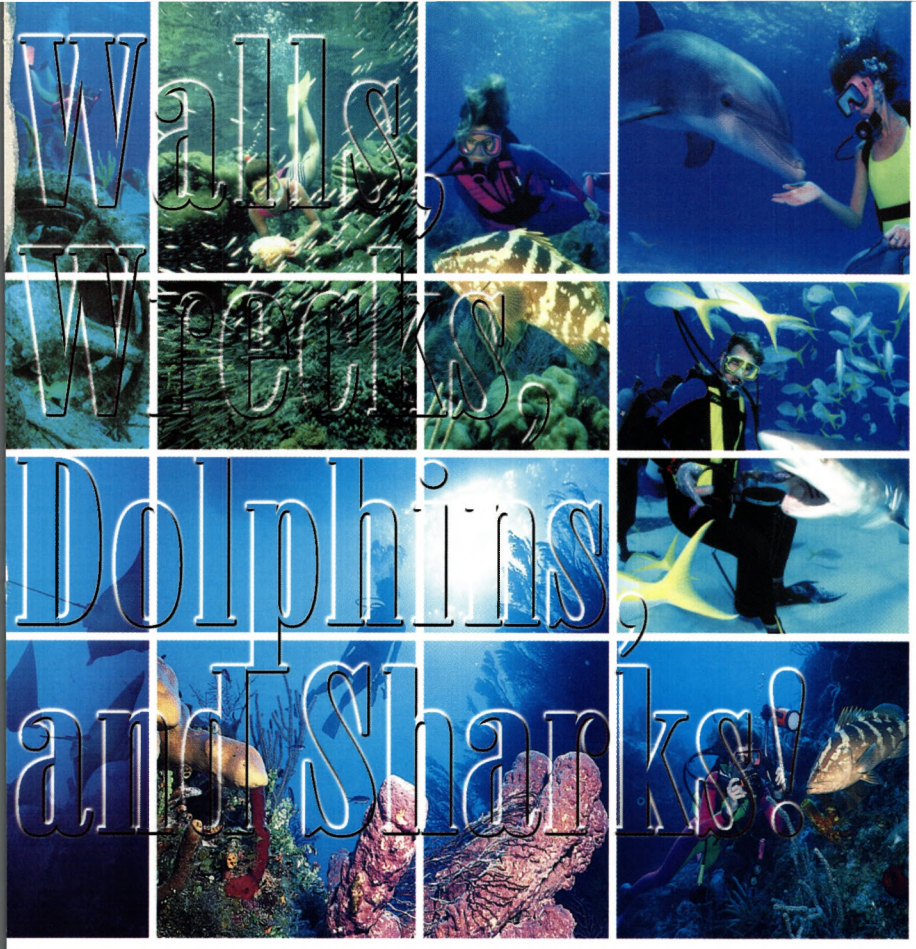
More recently, I had an encounter of the second kind. During a dive at North Seymour Island in the Galapagos, I was photographing a group of red sea stars on the sandy bottom. Seemingly from out of nowhere, a young female sea lion appeared and made several close passes—investigating me or, perhaps, trying to get my attention. She eventually picked up one of the sea stars I had been photographing and, holding it gently in her teeth, looked right into my mask for a second or two.

She then swam up toward the surface, turned a somersault and swam back down, still holding onto to the sea star. She swam up again, this time dropping her "toy," which floated back down toward the bottom. Before the sea star landed, she swooped down and grabbed it once more in her mouth. I could not believe my luck—not only was all of this happening right in front of me, but I even had the right lens on my camera!

Female sea lions are notoriously playful animals. Many divers have observed them playing with driftwood, bubbles, stones and a variety of non-food animals such as Marine Iguanas. Of course, observing this behavior and capturing it on film are two very different things; sea lions are extremely agile and fast-moving underwater and do not ordinarily pose for pictures.

When the performance ended, she gently dropped the sea star to the sandy bottom, gave me a brief look as though waiting for applause, then swam off. I had been the recipient of a free front row ticket to an underwater ballet, performed by one of the most graceful animals in the sea. — BY DAVID HALL

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